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## TWO VISITS TO THE WEST COAST OF CONNAUGHT.

BY MISS BALFOUR.



DURING the past year I have been twice through some of the poorest and most congested districts of Mayo and Galway, and I propose in the present paper, not to give a continuous narrative of either journey, but, without adhering to any strictly chronological order, to give a short account of some of our experiences in the less known and more inaccessible parts of the West Coast and islands which I then saw. It would take too much space for one article were I to attempt to describe our visits to the not less interesting districts of Connemara and the Donegal Highlands, or to give any detailed account of the work being carried on for the relief of distress, which was the occasion of Lady Zetland's tour last April; but these may possibly be treated of hereafter.

My first visit to the West of Connaught was in company with the Chief Secretary, at the end of October 1890, when we spent several days driving from place to place on outside cars, stopping frequently to have a few words of conversation with the men digging the potatoes in the fields by the roadside, and to examine the quality of their crops; visiting the priests of the various villages on our route, and discussing with them and others the best methods of meeting the impending distress and the more permanent difficulties of congestion; sometimes being met by eager and curious crowds, who, after listening to a few words from the Chief Secretary, sped the party on its way with cheers and blessings; and having driven forty to sixty miles a

day, sometimes in pouring rain, often reaching our destination after dark.

My visit in April with Lady Zetland presented a great contrast to this. Instead of rain varied by hail and wind, we had brilliant sunshine and glassy sea. Where we had formerly seen the rotten potato crops being dug up, we now saw good seed, procured through the Boards of Guardians, being put into the ground. The results of the careful investigations as to the relief of distress were shown in the numbers of men working on piers, roads and railways; and everywhere we were met with addresses of welcome, full of strong expressions of gratitude for the work given by Government and the help received from the Irish Distress Fund. The ground covered by the two tours was by no means the same. Except to visit Achill, Mr. Balfour did not leave the mainland. Lady Zetland's tour, on the contrary, was chiefly among the larger islands along the coast. The peninsula of the Mullet, forming the extreme north-western portion of the County of Mayo, and almost separated from it by the great land-locked harbours of Broadhaven and Blacksod Bay, was visited on both occasions, but the Chief Secretary only visited the northern part and Lady Zetland the southern part of the district.

The Chief Secretary's visit to this dreary spot took place on one of the stormiest days in which I have ever been out. It had been intended that we should go that day in the gunboat *Banterer*, which was lying in Blacksod Bay, round Achill Head to Dooega; but when Captain Roper left us on the previous evening, after having arranged this programme for the next morning, he found that the sea was even then too rough for him to get back to his ship; and all night long the wind blew a gale, accompanied by thunder and violent hail-showers, so that next morning, to the great satisfaction of some of the party, it was considered quite out of the question to go to Achill by sea. This gave us a day to spend on the Mullet, and we started off across it with the usual little procession of outside cars, well wrapped in waterproofs, and the men of the party in hideous black Mackintosh "sou'-westers" tied under their chins. Not having gone through a weary apprenticeship with bonnet-ribbons, some of them were wholly incapable of dealing with their strings themselves; and I longed to be able to reproduce the scene, especially after our return in the afternoon, when with numbed fingers they feebly fumbled to undo each other's strings, while the wet trickled down their faces, crimson and purple with the wind and hail.



The Mullet forms part of the Barony of Erris, famed for such a complete absence of trees, that Arthur Young, in his "Tour in Ireland," tells a story of a youth who, on leaving the Barony, saw a tree for the first time in his life, and asked his father with astonishment what it could be? The district which the Chief Secretary's party now went through consisted chiefly, as far as I could see in the intervals between the hail-showers, of long stretches of bog-land with a low range of heathery hills beyond. Here and there we passed a few wretched-looking cottages, usually consisting merely of four rough stone walls, an earthen floor, and a thatched roof fastened down with straw-ropes, and frequently without a chimney. Most of the people own a few cattle, but they looked thin and in bad condition, even in autumn, and in spring were miserable objects. The black and white pigs, too, which infest the roads, doing their best to get run over by every passing vehicle, looked leggy and lanky, and would be scorned by any farmer on this side of the Channel. Indeed, the only domestic animals which appear thoroughly happy are the geese, of which there are large numbers; but even these are small in size compared to those in the more well-to-do parts of the country. The roads, as is usual when made over bog, are raised some feet above the level of the surrounding land, with deep wide trenches on each side. These bog roads are as springy as if made of india-rubber, so that you can see them move under the pressure of the wheels. I was at first somewhat surprised on hearing of "men hiding *behind* the ditch," till I found that the name "ditch" was applied to the turf banks bordering these trenches on the landward side. Some of the Mullet roads were made as Relief works in 1848, and the population having considerably diminished since then, they are little used and are gradually becoming impassable.

As we approached the Coast Guard Station on the north-east of the peninsula, the land got more and more marshy—a veritable winter paradise for web-footed birds. A few small flocks of wild geese of several species were already here, but the wild swans and many others had not yet arrived from the north. The coast guardsmen welcomed us warmly. We left our cars at their station, and prepared to walk across the links to where the Atlantic waves were breaking over the rocks, but no sooner had we left the shelter of the house wall than the wind caught us with a fury that made management of skirts an

impossibility, and I was obliged to stay behind. With bent heads to avoid the stinging sand, and with slow steps struggling against the gale, the rest of the party started. Their return journey was at a run, with coats ballooned like sails in front of them. On our way back we branched off along one of the "48" roads to a little fishing village rejoicing in the unromantic name of Tip. It is little more than a row of small whitewashed huts, out of which the inhabitants hurriedly issued as we came up, all looking with interest and curiosity at the Chief Secretary, while the women gave me the kindest invitations to come in and get warmed and dried at their fires. But there was no time to spare for this, and after we had been taken to see the entrance to the harbour, the Chief Secretary was surrounded by the fishermen, eager to spend the few minutes left to us in talking to him and showing him their "curraghs," or canvas canoes, while they explained their mode of construction and use. Blind Harbour, on the bank of which the village stands, is a sea-lough something over a mile long, with a very narrow opening, through which, when we saw it, the sea was running like a torrent, raising the level of the water near the entrance more than a foot each time a big wave broke outside. Through wind and spray we struggled round the point forming the neck of the harbour, and the most tremendous breakers I ever saw burst suddenly on our view. One of our party profanely likened them to the roof of the Crystal Palace. The roar was so great that we could hardly hear ourselves speak, while the sea, which had the effect of being at a higher level than ourselves, looked as though it must pour down upon us and overwhelm us every instant.

It was on a very different day that I visited the Mullet for the second time, in April with Lady Zetland. As we drove from Elly Bay to Belmullet the sea lay beside us almost without a ripple, reflecting an occasional white cloud in the blue sky. The dark purple and brown of the bog-land was exchanged for pale ochreous fields, in which the young spring green was just beginning to show. The sun shone brightly on the golden gorse. Lambs, no bigger than cats, were disporting themselves on the turf bank, and innumerable larks were singing overhead. But the squalid village of Binghamstown, which we presently passed, with its ruinous remains of pretentious buildings, and the deserted-looking modern castle with its long line of curtain walls, reminded us too surely that we were still in the distressful country. Abundant evidence that the efforts of the Government

to avert distress in the district had been appreciated was given in the wonderfully cordial way in which Lady Zetland was now received. Bonfires lined the route, and heaps of flaming straw were tossed up by the men and women as we passed. At Belmullet the Canal bridge and the town were decorated with evergreens and flags. The market place was crowded, and the cheers resounded again and again as Father Hewson, accompanied by the Rector, Mr. Clarke, read out addresses of welcome, expressing the gratitude of those who had benefited by Relief works and by the Irish Distress Fund.

To return to our November expedition. Mr. Balfour's party drove to Achill the day following the one spent on the Mullet. On reaching the Sound, as the narrow, river-like channel is called which divides the island from the mainland, a considerable crowd ran to meet us at the door of the little hotel, and when we presently came out again, Father O'Connor called for three cheers for the Chief Secretary, which were given loudly and with much enthusiasm and waving of hats. Standing bare-headed on the step, with Father O'Connor beside him, Mr. Balfour spoke a few words expressing his distress at the failure of the potato crop, and his desire to help the people by the new Railway about to be made between Westport and Achill. Interjections of blessing and thanks from the crowd accompanied his remarks, and renewed cheers at the close followed us as we drove away across the bridge over the Sound. Public speaking was an unlooked-for development in our tour, but this proved only the first of many speeches Mr. Balfour made to enthusiastic crowds assembled to meet him on his route. He spoke again that evening at Dooegea, where he was warmly welcomed; but as Mrs. Harvey, our kind hostess for the night, in whose dog-cart I was then driving, turned back owing to the bad state of the road, I did not hear him. The condition of this road is a striking illustration of recent Irish history. Some years ago the inhabitants of Dooegea refused to pay their rents, and on hearing that the Sheriff with a protecting force on cars was on the way to seize their cattle in satisfaction of the decree obtained against them, they proceeded to cut trenches across the road several feet in width and depth, thus effectually preventing the cars from getting further, as the bog on either side was equally impassable. The crisis being over, the gaps were filled by the simple process of throwing in a few boulders, which is all the repair the road had received for the two years previous to our driving along it.

During the past winter it has been put in thorough order, as one of the Relief works ; and probably some of the people who destroyed it are the very people whose families have been kept from want by its renewal.

The Railway from Westport which Mr. Balfour promised when speaking at Achill Sound in October was in full course of construction when Lady Zetland's party, five months afterwards, drove through the district ; and as the line is to run close to the road for much of the way, we constantly saw rows of men wheeling earth in barrows, standing in dark relief against the sky on the embankments, or grouped with spade and pickaxe in the cuttings. Now and then we saw the neat-looking iron huts provided for those of the men who lived too far off for them to return home at night. These huts, with their boarded floors and large windows, look so infinitely preferable to the dark and dirty hovels that the people usually live in, that one would have expected quite a rush to get the chance of sleeping in them ; but this has not proved to be the case. There is a difficulty in getting them occupied at all ; and though I frequently heard cheers for Mr. Balfour for giving work on the Railway, I only once during the whole tour heard "three cheers for Mr. Balfour's huts." It was a dark night and pouring torrents of rain at the time, which may have caused this unusual appreciation of their advantages.

On the bridge at Achill Sound an arch had been put up in Lady Zetland's honour, with the word "Welcome" ingeniously formed of shovels and picks, and decorated with evergreens and flags, as were the houses on either side ; and a large crowd, cheering and shouting, accompanied us as we walked across. The drive from here to Dugort, on the north side of the island, where we were to sleep, was over heather and bog for miles, one or two very miserable-looking villages being visible on the distant hillside. Every now and then a knot of people would meet us on the road, following the carriage and handing in petitions. One man complained bitterly of not being employed on the Relief works, and appeared to think that his grievance in this particular was greatly increased by the fact that he had six cows and had sold one. He enlarged on these topics at considerable length, sternly repressing any one else who attempted to put in a word when he was obliged to stop for a moment to draw breath. Very ragged, squalid, and dirty, most of them looked, and one could easily imagine what I was told was the case, that there was much deformity and disease in some of the wretched

little hamlets in the island. It was getting dark as Lady Zetland's party reached Dugort, but there was still light enough to see the arches of evergreens, with the words "God save the Queen" and "Welcome," and the lines of flags stretched across the road and floating from the house-tops, while the whole population seemed to have come out to greet us with enthusiastic cheers as our break-and-four dashed up to the door of the little hotel. Dugort is a much more prosperous-looking place than any we had seen since we left the Sound, and can boast of houses with slate roofs and two stories. Close above it rises the peak of Slievemore; and here tradition tells the story of an adventurous man who used every year to rob the eagles of their young, and who on one occasion, when defending himself from the old birds, severed with his sickle most of the strands of the rope by which he hung, and whose hair turned white during the long-drawn peril of his subsequent ascent.

Achill and the neighbouring parts of the mainland are exceedingly like parts of the Highlands of Scotland in outline and colouring, but the climate is very different. In a country so utterly forlorn, so bleak and bare, where the nearest approach to a tree is an old stump in a bog, it comes upon one as a shock to find fuchsias, Pernettyas crimson with berries, myrtles, hydrangeas, lemon-scented verbenas with stems as thick as a man's arm, New Zealand flax, and even aloes, luxuriating in the open air wherever any one has cared to grow them. Every turf bank at the side of the roads has the *Osmunda regalis* growing on it; and great patches of indigenous Mediterranean heath flourish in sheltered places.

The *Hawk*, a steamer which has been chartered by Government for carrying supplies to the islands while the exceptional distress continues, and which was now put at Lady Zetland's disposal, was lying in the bay, and next morning we steamed to Belmullet, visiting Inishkea on the way back. The Southern island of Inishkea, on which we landed, is low and flat, with no marked features of any kind. As we came to anchor off the little bay on which the village is situated, numbers of curraghs put off to meet us, and soon the *Hawk* was surrounded with them dashing through the water, their excited owners seeming to take no heed as to which way they were going or what might be in front of them, but yet avoiding collisions as if by magic. Escorted by them, we were rowed to the little pier, the additions to which now being made are part of the Govern-



ment Relief works. The inhabitants crowded to meet us there, with the warmest demonstrations of welcome, the so-called "Kings" of the two islands in the forefront; and thus surrounded by men, women, and children all talking Irish at once, we walked along to the nearest cabins. The head of the little bay, with its sandy beach, is lined with miserable little hovels of the usual type. The doorways are so low that one has to stoop to get into them, while inside almost the only light comes, blue and dim, down the chimneys, or rather holes that do duty as such. It was not easy to distinguish anything in the dusk of the interiors, but there was not often much to distinguish. Chairs, tables, and beds were conspicuous by their absence; a rough bench, a stool or two, some straw, or a heap of rags in a corner, usually making up all the furniture; while a single room provided shelter, not merely for the whole family, but for all the live-stock of which it was possessed. Outside not a vestige of green was visible anywhere, the surroundings being of a uniform grey drab tone. On one side of the bay were a number of tiny potato patches, enclosed by tumbledown walls, looking more like divisions in an ill-made chessboard than anything else, but useful to protect the potatoes from the cutting Atlantic winds. Last season's potatoes had failed here as elsewhere, and the islanders had eaten all those that should have been kept for seed. The Belmullet Board of Guardians, who, in common with other Boards, have many difficulties to contend with in providing the various kinds of potato to suit the particular fancies of different localities, could not supply them with "Lumpers," which they wanted, until May, too late for planting. "Champions," a variety very largely used in the country, are objected to on this island, partly on account of the height of the haulms exposing them too much to the winds. Before we left the West we had the satisfaction of hearing that the "Lumpers," which had been promised by Lady Zetland, were on their way out. Dreary and depressing as was the appearance of the island, the appearance of its inhabitants was even more so. Ragged and faded garments we had seen before, but so large a proportion of persons either lame or hunch-backed, dwarfed or deficient in intellect, blind of an eye, or with terrible disfigurements of face and skin, I never saw before, and hope never to meet again. One man only did I note as being of a fine type physically, and he, I was afterwards told, was not a native, but having married an islander had settled there. This miserable



state of affairs is said to be due partly to too close inter-marriage—the islanders until within the last fifty years rarely marrying except among themselves—and partly to the demoralization attending on potheen-making, or illicit distilling of whiskey, which it is to be feared prevails to a considerable extent. The difficulties in detecting its manufacture in remote islands such as these are very exceptional, as, owing to their distance from the mainland and the rough sea dividing them from it, they are practically unapproachable for seven months in the year; and when at any time the police do come, warning by signals or otherwise is easily given, and it is not unreasonable to conclude that everything connected with the stills is found to have been carefully hidden away.

A gentleman of whom I made some enquiries respecting the title of "King of Inishkea" gave me the following information. The title is said to have come down from the Middle Ages, and was hereditary in a family of the name of Caine. The Kings used to lead the fleets of currachs in the days when fishing was a real business, and led or organized attacks on sailing vessels becalmed off the islands. On these occasions the boats would surround the ships, and the islanders get on board in large numbers on pretence of barter, when they would carry off everything they wished for. This continued till well on in this century; and there are some very old men alive now who were at one time transported for these acts of piracy. The Kings used to decide all disputes, and from their decisions there was no appeal. They and their families were treated with much consideration, and received the largest share of the spoils from vessels as well as of drift-wood and sea-weed. The direct male line died out some five-and-twenty years ago in a somewhat tragic manner. The King's only son, a fine young fellow, died before his father, and it is said that the whole family, father, mother, and three daughters, died within two years of grief at the loss of the young man. The present "King" of the north island is a man of the name of John Lavelle, a native of Inishboffin, who came lobster-fishing to Inishkea and married a near relation of the last King, and on whom in consequence has fallen some of the dignity of kingship; while his son, a fine tall young fellow with a red beard, is recognized as the heir-apparent. Lavelle arbitrates in local disputes, but his decisions are not always treated as final, appeals to the law of the United Kingdom not being unknown. He has none of the material advantages of royalty, receiving no extra

share of wreckage or weed. The man who is sometimes called the King in the south island is not recognized as such by the inhabitants, nor does he exercise the functions of judge, and seems to have received the title of King from strangers, because he happens to be the richest man in the island.

With the waning authority of the Kings has apparently come the increased power of the priests, who had long set themselves against the acts of piracy encouraged, as before mentioned, by some of the predecessors of John Lavelle. It is not many years since the priests succeeded in crushing a superstition which almost amounted to a kind of idolatry. A stone image or Storm God, rudely carved into a human shape, was set up on the south island, but was afterwards for years on the north island, where it was kept in a kind of temple erected for it (the remains of which are still standing), and from this it would be taken out and set facing the quarter from which the natives desired that a storm should come. It was subsequently brought back to the south island, and there it was broken up by a priest some fifteen or twenty years ago. The islanders put the pieces together again and kept them in position by a kind of garment fastened round them; but the priest returned, carried the fragments out to sea, and threw them overboard. In a district where wood is so scarce and difficult to get for building or furniture, and where firewood is of great importance (for there is now no turf on Inishkea), the value of a wreck on the coast is enormous, and wrecking used to be practised whenever possible, with the usual barbarous accompaniments with which we have been made familiar in stories of the Cornish coast; but no instance of it has been known since 1848. Though no illegal means for getting wreckage are now resorted to, the drift-wood is as much valued as ever, and the people all along this part of the coast bemoan the diminution in quantity consequent on the use of iron in shipbuilding and the increase in the number of lighthouses.

Other superstitions still linger in the district, such as its being unlucky to bury a drowned man; that the souls of drowned persons go into seals; and the existence of fairies. It is said that there are five seals in Broadhaven Bay well known to be much more wary and cunning than any others, and these have "the fairies" in them, instead of human souls.

Some line-fishing is still carried on at Inishkea in the curraghs, many of which, besides those that had come out to meet us, we saw

lying bottom upwards on the beach. These curraghs are a great improvement on the old almost circular ones which I believe still exist on the Boyne, and are somewhat more like ordinary boats than the ones we saw in the Mullet. There they are built with round bottoms without keels, high and narrow at each end, and without rudders. They are made of thin boards about 4 inches wide, running along their whole length, with parallel interspaces about the same width as the boards. The whole is then covered with black canvas. They will hold four men, and are wonderfully light and buoyant; but how they can be steered in a rough sea is a mystery to the uninitiated. These Mullet coracles cost about £4 10s. The Inishkea boats differed from them in being more of the shape of elongated punts, square at the stern, and in having no interspaces between the boards, so that one was not afraid of putting one's foot through the bottom as one got in. They are as destitute of keel and rudder as the Mullet boats. We returned to the *Hawk* in these primitive barques, and though it cannot be said that they are comfortable to sit in, huddled up as one is on the bottom of the sloping stern, still in the smooth water of the little bay one was not troubled by anticipations of an imminent wetting.

The sun was setting in glorious colour as we returned that evening to Dugort, the curious peaked "Black rock," further out to sea, looking almost transparent; the little island of Duvillaun, with, as its name indicates, black rocky sides, lying to our left, while Achill Head in front was lit up with pink and orange sunset lights, and furrowed with mysterious-looking blue shadows.

We were equally fortunate in the weather next day, when under a brilliant blue sky Lady Zetland and her party rounded Achill Head on their way to Clare and the other islands. There was just enough haze to give the full effect of height to the peak of Croaghnaun, and the splendid line of cliffs projecting into the sea like a great arm bent at the elbow. The water was quite smooth, and the cormorants, guillemots, and razor-bills dotted about on it were so bold as to allow the steamer to come almost upon them before they dived. The view of the north end of Clare Island was, perhaps owing to the haze, almost as fine as that of Achill Head, but on rounding the north-eastern promontory we lost sight of it, and instead of peaks and cliffs, had in front of us only low hillsides cultivated in patches, and the little bay and harbour of Kinnahooley, overlooked on the south side by the remains of the old castle of Grace O'Malley. This is

not a large building, and as seen from the village, one would not guess it to be as old as the days of Queen Elizabeth. Moreover, whitewash, though cleanly, is not imposing. Round it were crowded numbers of the inhabitants, who, as we neared the shore, ran down to join the crowd on the pier and the crews of our escort of boats, cheering vigorously as we landed. After the experience of Inishkea it was an immense relief to see that the Clare islanders looked by no means very wretched, and I was not struck by any remarkable amount of disease or deformity among them. The houses, too, seemed somewhat better than those of Inishkea, and the soil lighter, drier, and less peaty than what I have usually seen on the West Coast.

We walked a little way across the beach, up to two small whitewashed houses, where we met and were introduced to Father Molloy, who welcomed us very cordially; and presently we entered one of the houses beside which we had been standing, which is the nearest approach to a hotel on the island. It was very neat and clean, the walls hung with prints, and with strings of guillemots' eggs and other little ornaments about the room. The cool shade was very refreshing after the hot sun outside. The state of the tide prevented us from seeing the Relief works at the harbour, but we walked a few hundred yards off along the sand to where a road is being made overlooking the shore. Returning to the village, we were asked to listen to an address from the school-children. It was read out by a little boy named after General Gordon, who was dressed in one of the brown corduroy suits sent in connection with the Irish Distress Fund. He did not seem at all troubled with shyness as he stood facing us in front of his companions and surrounded by the smiling faces of the crowd, and he read very well, although his pauses for breath did not always coincide with the ends of his sentences. Both here and elsewhere much gratitude was expressed to us for the clothes we had been able to send to the children, as well as other forms of relief; and I heard of a man remarking that "had it not been for the famine they would all have been starving."

The address having been read, we went back to our boat, and left the island amid much shaking of hands and renewed cheers. Passing on our left the uninhabited island of Caher, with its rugged and indented cliffs, we next visited Inishturk. This island has a much more rocky surface near the landing-place than either Inishkea or Clare, and the hillside rose more abruptly

from the shore, but it had no specially fine features. Rowing from the steamer, you come upon the tiny harbour quite suddenly round a point of rock. The water is exquisitely transparent, showing the white sand and seaweed far down in its depths, and one longed to bathe in it, till one noticed certain uninviting remains of dead fish here and there among the seaweed. This was the only place we came to in all our tour amongst the islands where our arrival occasioned no interest whatever. Most of the men were away collecting sea-wrack for manure, but the few that remained hardly came out of their hovels, or if they did so, gave us but a lack-lustre gaze. The little houses were dotted round about the harbour, often built on the bare rock. A grey pony with two panniers was standing in a heap of seaweed at which he kept munching away with persistency, and treating us with as supreme an indifference as did his masters. Mr. Hervey, R.E., who is in charge of the Relief works on these islands, took me to see a hut, inhabited by an old woman, who was, however, unfortunately out, so that we could not see the interior. It was but little bigger than a good-sized English pigstye, and looked as if it could by no possibility have been made to hold an ordinary bedstead in any position whatever.

A new road is being made from here to the other side of the island, where I understood that there is a larger population, and that the houses are better. This road was as yet in the roughest stage of untrodden sharp-pointed metal, from which the flags at the sides formed a welcome relief. To walk along the edge of a road seems to be the natural instinct of the Turk islander, for it was in consequence of the inveterate habit of man and beast to do so, much to the detriment of the road, that the border of flat stones was added.

If the inhabitants of Inishturk took no interest in our party, the same cannot be said of those at Inishboffin. The *Hawk* anchored off a little inlet on the east side of the island, where a crowd was awaiting us. The little boats that came racing out to meet us had oars erected in their sterns decorated with red and white streamers, and cheer upon cheer greeted us as we pulled to the beach, and as our boat was hauled up by fishermen to give us a dry landing. Smiles and welcomes met us on all sides, and the shaking of hands can only be compared to that of a Lancashire crowd on the evening of a parliamentary election. Nearly all the population seemed to have come out to meet us ;



the women with shawls thrown over their heads and shoulders, short, madder-dyed petticoats, and bare feet ; the men in rough drab suits, with slouch hats tawny from exposure ; the children, bright and rosy-faced, in all sorts of costumes, but often, boys and girls alike, in frocks of the homespun flannel, usually without head-gear and always without shoes. Preceded, surrounded, and followed by these, the children's little feet tripping over the sharp stones as comfortably as if on a soft pile carpet, we walked by a bridle-track across the south-east point of the island to the harbour, where also lies the main village. The road was bounded on each side by cultivated ground, which, as in Clare Island, seemed to me to be of better quality than much on the opposite coast, the different patches being as usual walled in by rough banks or stone fences dotted by an occasional daisy or violet. The island is undulating, but nowhere more than 300 feet high. The harbour is very pretty, and being sheltered at the south and west by a stony promontory and island, is completely land-locked. Vessels as large as the *Hawk* (348 tons) can lie inside it, though it must require careful manœuvring to get them safely out again. On the end of the promontory are some ruins commonly called "Cromwell's Castle ;" but I was told that they are really the remains of buildings formerly erected by the Norwegians to protect their fisheries. The Dutch and other nations also obtained fishing rights from the Government at various periods along these coasts, paying large sums for their privileges.

At the head of the harbour we found the principal inhabitants of the island, who had expected us to land there, including the priest, Father McHugh, the proprietor of the island, Mr. Allies, and Mrs. Allies. Mr. Allies has a little yacht lying in the harbour, and having a knowledge of boat-building, does much to instruct the islanders in fishing, and keeping their boats in good repair. Two gentlemen from the Land Commission, who were here in connection with the distribution of seed potatoes, also met us. They had been making arrangements to enable some of the poorer islanders, both here and at Clare, who were unable to purchase seed potatoes for themselves and who were ineligible for regular work on the Relief roads and piers, to be paid in seed potatoes instead of money until they should have earned as many as they required for the year's planting, when they are again struck off the Relief roll. This arrangement was very popular, as it saved them from the anxieties of future debt, and



did not necessitate ready money—an article scarcer, if possible, in the West of Ireland than elsewhere. There was no obvious sign of want visible among the people here, and, as at Clare, they looked strong and healthy, though not of so fine a physical type as I have seen in some other parts of the West. Father McHugh informed me that the inhabitants of the three islands—Clare, Turk, and Boffin—intermarry greatly with each other, but hardly at all with the mainlanders. Whether the population of the three islands combined (numbering about 1690) is sufficient to prevent too close relationship, or whether it is the comparatively small amount of potheen-drinking, certainly the painful consequences so visible at Inishkea do not seem to have resulted here.

The evening was now coming on, and as the captain was anxious to get to the mouth of the Killeries before dark, we were obliged to hurry away to get on board the *Hawk*, which was waiting for us outside the harbour, feeling that we had had all too short a glimpse of these out-of-the-way islands, which, remote as they seem, are yet but little over 400 miles from London. Being fully exposed to the Atlantic, it is very rare that the sea is calm enough for pleasurable visits to the islands, and we were singularly fortunate in having two such days for our expedition—days which might not occur consecutively more than two or three times in the year. Before we reached Killery Bay the sun was setting behind us, and sank into the sea without a cloud to hide its disc. In front, Muilrea, one of the highest of the Mayo mountains, rose from the water, but its "bald flat" head was hidden by mist, and dark clouds were gathered beyond it. A red flaring bonfire was lighted on one of the little rocky islets, and as we advanced up the narrow winding sea-lough, one after another of these burst into flame, illuminating the hillsides and sending long flickering reflections across the water. The *Hawk* crept up slowly towards Leenane, and as we reached our anchorage, a gun was fired on board, the sound rolling back in splendid echoes from the hills. A tar-barrel was blazing on the pier in front of us, lighting up the faces and garments of the closely-packed crowd with its red glow; and as we approached the landing-place and mounted the steps, cheer after cheer greeted us, repeated again and again from the darkness beyond with "Cead mille failthe."

## ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS,

AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY."



### CHAPTER XVII.

JUNE and July went by, and still Swift was in Berkshire. Not far from Wantage a bosky cluster of elm-trees fills up a fold of the downs. Passing along the ancient grassy road called the Ridge Way, you look down on it, and see a church tower and perhaps a red gable or two and a wreath of blue smoke rising above the heavy summer foliage, sole signs of the village of Letcombe Bassett. In this quiet spot, that hears scarcely any sound except the noise of water and the rushing of the great down winds in the tree-tops, here in the house of a silent eccentric parson of small means, he boarded himself out and let the busy world go its way. It was not in any spirit of cheerful philosophy that he thus threw aside the tangled skein of his affairs, public and private, nor did he consciously go to Nature for consolation. But she, although she could not give him cheerfulness, did unasked deliver him from the storms of bitter anger, the thousand agitations, the "fever of the soul" that mined his being in London and in Dublin, and bestow upon him a certain calm, as it were the calm of a lowering autumn day. The long internecine struggle between his friends Bolingbroke and the Lord Treasurer had ended in the overthrow of the latter; and Swift, who had been maddened by his obstinacy and stupidity in the days of his prosperity, stood by him with loyal affection in his disgrace. Now Queen Anne was dead, his own hopes of advancement dead with her, and his friends, as it was rumoured, likely to be accused of high treason. He hardly knew why he lingered; perhaps partly because he shrank from returning to Dublin, partly because he loved, however uselessly, to stand by his friends when they were in trouble. Even had he known how far Bolingbroke and

Peterborough and Atterbury had gone in those intrigues with St. Germain which had so little of his sympathy, he could not have borne to forsake them. His own political career was over, and with it he thought all that was worth calling his life.

"Few and evil have been my days," he murmured to himself, and bowed his head on his breast, as he came along the Ridge Way, returning from one of those long rides which were at once a diversion to him and a cure for his bodily ailments. Five-and-thirty years of servitude had been his, yet five of comparative obscurity, some three or four of power and fame and strenuous life, when, like a swimmer borne shorewards on the summit of a wave, he had rejoiced in his strength and made sure of reaching his goal ; but the wave was spent, and again he was engulfed in the trough of the sea, this time as it seemed never to re-emerge. Nor was his ambition or his disappointment all of a petty and personal kind. Faults he had as a politician and as a man ; he was imperious and prejudiced in a generation in which his freedom from many prejudices was more remarkable than his slavery to some. But he had strong sense, a far-seeing mind, and above all a public spirit, a love of justice, an inflexible uprightness almost unique in the petty venal herd which was soon to be priced and bought by Walpole. He was fitted to serve his country, he had overcome as no man before him had overcome the difficulties of poverty and want of powerful connections, and had sat as an equal at the Councils of Ministers, by that equality doing more to affirm the dignity of the Church than any Bishop in the House of Lords. A turn of the wheel, and not only was his every achievement rendered null and void, but the party on whom he fondly imagined the prosperity of England to depend was not so much deprived of power as annihilated. Over these public misfortunes, over the misfortunes and difficulties of his private life, he brooded ceaselessly, sitting with a book before him in the little wainscoted parlour at Letcombe Bassett or roaming through the lanes and fields. It was his folly, his weakness, perhaps his inevitable curse to be unable to refrain his thoughts from wandering again and again in the same well-trodden weary unprofitable ways. The oftener they returned thither, the greater, the more intolerable appeared the wrongs he had suffered from Nature, from Fortune, from his fellow-men. Nothing but hard galloping on horseback seemed able to shake the brooding demon from his soul, and that but for a little. Happily his friend Mr. Harley had made him a present of a powerful horse that carried his weight easily. Often in the

gathering dusk or when the wild gusts of rain were driving over the open downs, the lonely shepherd, standing in the doorway of his wheeled hut, would be startled by the quick heavy thud of hoofs coming along the Ridge Way, and see a great iron-grey horse pass by at a gallop, sometimes with every sinew stretched to the utmost, foam flying from the bit and blood on the rider's spur. At other times, when the hour was earlier and the day fairer, the grim-looking rider would draw rein and exchange some simple talk with the shepherd about the weather and his flock ; on which subject, in spite of, or perhaps in consequence of his deferentially proffered questions and opinions, the shepherd pronounced him to be a very knowing gentleman, though he could not go so far as to altogether contradict the Letcombe folk, who held the poor gentleman to be weak in his intellects, and for this reason placed by his friends under the care of Parson Gery. Swift was no enthusiast for Nature ; a well-planted orchard and a trim willow-walk gave him more definite pleasure than the wide prospect from the Ridge Way, which probably affected him little more than it had done the Roman legionaries that had passed along it before him. Yet he climbed the steep way thither again and again out of love for the light fresh airs that stream across the downs, the feel and the scent of their fine springy turf, and the freedom of the long galloping ground, rolling itself out interminably before him under the immensity of the sky.

One day early in August, the weather being fine but not hot—for there was a light breeze blowing and fleecy clouds drifting across the blue—he started for his ride earlier than usual, and about four o'clock in the afternoon dismounted from his heated horse in the stable yard of the parsonage.

"Rub him down well, boy," he said to the lad who took charge of him. "Look ye now, boy, as long as I am over you, never call a horse dry till you have rubbed yourself into a sweat over him, nor oblige him with the water pail till he is too cool to be anxious for 't. How you may treat your next master's cattle is none of my concern, but be sure you'll never see the colour of my money, beyond what the law obliges, unless you use my beast handsomely. Methinks the oats were lower in the sack this morning than they should have been. Look to that now as you love my money !"

The lad, who heard pretty much this discourse every day and never knew whether to grin or to be sulky at it, to-day resented the innuendo about the oats.

"Lor' bless your honour, how 'a do talk, and yer honour knowin' no more nor the babe unbarn o' beästs and vittles and thik loike! I tell 'ee this 'ere harse do eat a power o' wuts, that 'a do, and small shame to 'un, poor beäst, says I."

"Well, well, I'll pass it this once; but never think to deceive me, boy, or you'll find it's yourself that's mightily deceived. I shall find you out; faith, I shall."

And somewhat stimulated and cheered by his ride and his little encounter with the stable-boy, he walked into the house and opened the door of the small wainscoted parlour which was dedicated to his own use. It had a low casement window, on which the oblique rays of the afternoon sun were just beginning to strike, making a certain dimness and dazzle in the room. Through this he distinguished, to his amazement, the figure of a lady in very deep mourning, seated with her back to the light. He paused a moment on the threshold, inwardly cursing the stupidity of the maid-servant, who must have shown some visitor of his host's into his sanctum. But the idea had scarcely time to occur to him before the lady sprang to her feet and threw back her veil.

"Hess!" he cried in incredulity mingled with something like horror. "Good God! Can it be you?"

The trembling anxiety with which she had watched him enter the house grew to trembling fear.

"Don't be angry with me," she pleaded, "I could not help it. 'Twas too tantalising to pass through Wantage and not see you. Didn't you want to see me, Cadenus?"

"Yes—No, I mean. Why could you not send for me if you must be coming to Wantage?"

"I had no time, dear sir," she answered.

"Why the devil should you come by Wantage?" he continued. "Whither are you posting that you come this road rather than by Oxford?"

"To Witney, sir; and besides, sir," she went on, still anxiously excusing herself, "I had a desire to thank you for your kindness in the matter of the money. I dare assure you your signing the bond shall be but a form, yet it helped me mightily with Barber, who without it would I believe have looked very shyly on the loan."

"O, I hate to be thanked, miss, more especially for nothing! Pray, where is your discretion? You used to boast that you had abundance. You showed none in coming hither to set Mrs. Gery tattling."



The passionate annoyance that betrayed itself in his tone, and in the working of his heavy eyebrows, seemed far greater than the occasion warranted. If he had said his whole mind he would have cried : " I want to forget you ; I was succeeding in a measure, and here you come to undo my work. I do not know if I love you, but I do know that I hate the tangle you have made in my life."

If she had known the truth, Esther might not have felt so much surprise and indignation at her reception as now overcame her fear, causing her to flash one look upon him, and then, throwing her heavy veil once more over her face, walk out of the room and the house without a single word, or so much as seeing Mrs. Gery on the stairs in her best gown and cap. Mrs. Gery, who having but few incidents in her life was obliged to make the most of those that came in her way, had already held a little consultation with the servant on the subject of this mysterious lady, evidently young and fine in spite of her veil and her mourning, who had come to see the Dean and had excused herself from taking a dish of tea in the best parlour. Her rapid disappearance was disappointing, but increased the mystery of her appearance, and Mrs. Gery so plied the Dean with her questions and officious offers of entertainment, that it was some minutes before he could sneak out of the house and down the road after Esther. He followed her at a little distance, not wishing her to return to the parsonage. As she went down the steep hollow lane overarched by trees, she thought she heard the well-known footstep behind her, but would not turn. When she came to the bridge over the long pool formed by the millstreams, she paused a moment and leaned on the parapet, as though to look at a water-lily that was still in bloom, floating over its own reflection in the dark still water, and then she caught a glimpse of Swift following her ; but still she continued to walk on up the Letcombe Regis road. Swift came up with her and laid his hand on her shoulder.

" I ask your pardon, Governor Huff. I meant not to be unkind. I was vexed more for your sake than my own."

" I care not for your reasons," returned she, without looking at him. " Who'd think of 'em in the moment of a *joyful* surprise ? No—I was used to have a friend, but now it seems I have only a benefactor."

" Governor Huff will always be chiding because Cadenus is a sober old Doctor that can't forget his reasons. Yet sure that



makes him the better friend for a young woman that is sometimes—O, only sometimes, I allow!—no wiser than others of her sex and age.”

“A feeling friend would out of mere compassion have given me a kinder welcome, seeing the many uneasinesses I have to suffer. You do not know all, yet enough to have affected you with pity, had you been capable of it: my poor mamma dying while Moll was yet between life and death, a confusion in our affairs such as ’twould take a better lawyer than I to unravel, such a wretch of a brother as you cannot imagine, and the fear every day to fall alone, two unprotected young women, into the hands of the bailiffs. ’Twas for this reason we fled from London on Sunday, though Moll is most unfit to travel, and mean to lodge with a cousin at Witney till we get some money from my Irish estate. I cannot tell how far I am liable for these debts. Oh Cadenus, you are indeed heartless to add your displeasure, your most undeserved displeasure, to all my other afflictions!”

“Poor Bratikin!” he said. “How canst thou say I did not pity thee, when I did from my soul, and helped thee so far as in me lay?”

“Yes, I was mad and most ungrateful to say so,” she returned, sighing and throwing back her veil once more, as she pressed her hand to her forehead. “Well, ’tis a wonder I am not in Bedlam by this. You do pity me, that’s certain; but ’tis not just that I want of you. I want you to feel with me, Cadenus, you that know better than any man alive how to feel with your friends in their misfortunes. But I am very exacting to expect it, when indeed you do not know half mine, for I was afraid to commit them to the post, for fear all your letters should be read.”

“I am truly grieved for ’em before knowing ’em, little Hess. Could you not go to Lewis for counsel?”

“No, sir, not very conveniently. He had some disagreement with my dear mamma, which I do not well understand, but she was mightily huffed with him, for her, who was, as you must be sensible, the best-natured creature that ever breathed. He knew so much of our affairs too, that I feared he might require to know more, and ’tis the worst of our troubles that some of ’em might be termed disgraces.”

Swift’s eager sympathies, his friendship and regret for poor “neighbour Van,” and the true affection for Esther herself that underlay those other conflicting feelings of his towards her; all combined to break down the barrier between them which he had

mentally erected. There was not a soul to be met on the pleasant country road, which ran on accompanied for a time by a babbling stream and broadened by irregular stretches of turf dotted here and there with forest trees. As they walked on, Esther told him bit by bit, with many comments from both sides, the family history of the last two months. He had forbidden any of his friends to send him a newspaper, but he had heard of the mysterious death of Lord Peterborough's son, as to whom it was currently reported that he had been killed in a duel under circumstances in some way discreditable to him. This accounted for the fact that though Lord Peterborough could not prevent an inquest being held upon him, and a verdict of murder being returned against his adversary, he had yet taken no steps to procure evidence or to pursue the murderer, who had somehow immediately disappeared; for which neglect his Lordship was much blamed in certain quarters. This was all that had reached Swift of what had been for a week the talk of the town, and Esther was thankful to find it was so, for it showed there were some persons at least who could mention Mordaunt without mentioning Mrs. Mary Vanhomrigh. She had fancied, as people do fancy who either gossip or are gossiped about, that "every one" was talking of the story in which she herself was interested.

So in familiar talk that gradually obliterated the traces of their stormy meeting and of the last two months of separation, they walked on through Letcombe Regis and took the field way to Wantage. In the wide corn-land through which it first passes, the blue-stockinged reapers were cutting the corn, and the women were binding it in sheaves. The afternoon sunshine lay on the plain with its golden wealth of harvest, its clusters and lines of heavy foliaged elms; and its red-roofed homesteads; but fleecy clouds were still piled up on the horizon, and shadows were moving in silent procession along the line of the downs. Swift exchanged greetings with the country folk, who all with bob-curtsey or uplifted hat did that reverence to "the quality" which they considered less a matter of courtesy than a duty enjoined upon them at their baptism.

When they had reached a pleasant meadow, across which a chalk-stream from the downs ran sparkling and clear:

"Let us sit here awhile," said Swift; "I know you love to be romantic, and here's a purling stream, and yonder are willows enough. If I was you, when I had rested a bit, I would choose a handsome tree, take out my pocket-knife, and carve in the

bark of it an 'F.' and an 'E.,' twined round with a hempen rope tied in a true lovers' knot."

Esther, awaking from a reverie, stared at him.

"What's this you're talking of?" she asked.

"Why, Silly, if you're not in love with this cousin of yours this slashing swain, this Mordantino, 'tis mighty ungrateful of you."

"I am above answering your banter," returned Esther, tossing her chin and blushing deeply.

"I hope he is really indifferent to you, Hesskin," he continued, "for 'tis very unlikely you'll ever set eyes on him again. Yet 'tis certain he behaved very handsomely—though, when I come to think of it, 'twas for his own skin he was fighting, not yours, and he would without doubt have been forced to take his beating had you not intervened. Well, well! These are the scurvy tricks that noble lords love to play us commonality, and I wonder not if, on thinking the matter over, your Mordantino repented him of his generosity and could not forbear letting out the villain's life."

"For shame, Cadenus!" cried Esther. "You never loved poor Frank, but this passes everything. He is incapable of such a deed; and besides he strongly denied it, and I would stake my life upon his word."

"Peace, peace be with us, Missessy. I ask you a thousand pardons. I said it of purpose to provoke you—and must confess that when I hear how hotly you defend your spark, I am no longer surprised that Molly was of the opinion you was in love with him. Faith, she may be more right than either of us, for she's a wise girl in other folk's concerns, is poor Moll. They say, you know, that little misses can't read their own hearts."

There fell an ominous silence; Esther was pulling up blades of grass by the root and tearing them to shreds.

"Cruel! Hateful!" she cried, in a low voice. "O that I had never read mine, or let you read it! Yet, I must have died else. Died! If any one else could see into my heart, they'd wonder that I live, for you alone make my life insupportable, without considering the thousand other uneasinesses I must suffer. Why should I sit struggling with misfortunes, when not all the wealth of the Indies can promise me satisfaction? Why do I live? I know not, indeed I know not. Sometimes I am resolved to die."

"Hush, hush, Essie!" said Swift, not without agitation. "These are very wild words, and I could better excuse them in Moll, whose misfortunes have been much greater than yours."

"Poor Molly!" returned Esther, gloomily. "'Tis partly for her sake I continue to live. Yet I am not so good a Christian as to find satisfaction in living only for another. I know not how long I shall be able to endure it. Her misfortunes are part of my own; but I deny them to be greater than my private griefs."

"'Tis human nature to do that, Essie. There are few things we are so unwilling to admit about others' as that their luck has been worse than our own. Yet you cannot pretend to have lost at one blow the better half both of your fortune and your reputation, to say nothing of a lover who has come to a miserable end, though not more miserable than he deserved. You have your health. These troubles consequent upon poor Madam Van's death will pass over with a little management, and you will find yourself the mistress of a good fortune. Believe me, however the romantic may talk, health and wealth form two large parts of happiness, and sincere friendship the rest. As for these other fancies you will still be maundering about, no reasonable being can for an instant regard them."

"I am sick of your Reason and your Reasonable Beings," said she. "Pray, what does it all mean? Were I confined by some spell to this meadow and forbidden to get food from elsewhere, I should protest I starved, and doubtless the sheep would find me mighty ridiculous. Yes, yonder grave old ram would be positive I could not starve among all this good rich grass. You judge me after his manner, Cadenus, when you declare I have everything to make me happy."

"Happy?" repeated Swift, with a sombre look. "Who is happy? Happiness is a word the devil learned in Paradise to mock us with, lest we should find content. I do not say you are happy, foolish child, but I say you have much less reason to be unhappy than Moll; and I also say that you have not half her philosophy, who appears to have cured herself at once of her infatuation for her spark, when 'twas clear it could cause her nothing but uneasiness."

"Moll again! You can compare a thing so paltry as her flame for that poor wretch to the inexpressible love I bear—O Heavens! Why was I born with such feelings as sure no other creature in this dull age is cursed with, and all, all to be squandered on a block—a stone! 'Twould have been too much to hope that I should find a being whose heart was as capable of love as my own, yet I need not have chanced on one that knows not the very alphabet of it, and will not and

cannot learn. O, I see well enough 'tis Hebrew, 'tis Chinese to you—no need to tell me you have never loved, for could you give the least guess at what you make me suffer, you'd be a monster to inflict it."

Swift was seated on a knoll of grass, and his hands, clasped across his raised knees, were twisting and playing with his cane. As Esther spoke the blood ebbed from his face, leaving it ashy pale, and when she ended he did not raise his eyes from the point of the cane, which he kept digging into the ground. At length he spoke, but still without looking up.

"D'ye think I don't know what it means to suffer, Hess?"

"Not as I do, Cadenus."

He dropped his forehead on his clasped hands and began a laugh, which broke and turned to a long low moaning exclamation. Esther hearing it was seized with terror and remorse. She took him by the arm.

"Oh, sir, pray don't! Cadenus—dearest, I beg and pray your forgiveness a thousand million times. O Heavens, that I should cause you the least uneasiness! Wretch that I am, unworthy of your friendship, how indeed should you love me? 'Tis madness to dream it. Forgive me this once, and I'll try to be content, indeed I'll try not to complain.—Cadenus!"

Swift raised himself from his bowed posture.

"Let us be calm," he said; "both of us if we can. I forgive you, unhappy child, and hope you'll forgive me as freely. Very likely you think you have more to forgive, yet if you knew all, you'd see 'tis not so. We are both the victims of Fate, and 'tis of no avail to struggle. But there's one particular, Hess, of which, seeing your esteem and friendship for me, I warn you, and 'tis this. My constitution—'tis a secret, remember—is unsound. One of these days your upbraidings, if you continue them, will undoubtedly drive me out of—I mean, bring me to my end."

He spoke so solemnly that the warning could not be regarded as a mere attempt to frighten his friend into self-restraint. Esther shuddered and looked at him with wide eyes.

"Is it possible, sir, you have any malady that endangers your life? This is horrible."

"Horrible!" cried Swift, with energy. "'Tis hellish!" and he gripped her shoulder. "Look, Missessy, can you keep a secret? Yes, though a woman, I believe you can. You have told me your secret, I'll pay you in your own money and tell you mine—one I never whispered before to any living creature."



He hesitated ; then pointing to a great isolated elm, the topmost branches of which stood out lightning-seared and naked above its lower greenery, said :

"Look at that tree. 'Tis what I shall be, what I'm fast becoming—dead at the top. Think, Hess,—alive, but dead at the top." And he touched his forehead significantly. "There's some woman in a play—trust you to know all about it—raves like the very devil because she must be shut up in a vault with the bones of her ancestors. What's that to knowing yourself condemned to drag your own bones, your own hideous rotten contemptible corpse about the world, to be a mock, a scorn, a horror, alike to your friends and to your enemies? And that's the fate I see before me, have seen before me for years, but always getting nearer, till I seem to touch it, to feel it—Hush ! Don't let's talk of that any more, it's too frightful and shocking to speak of—and yet 'twill be."

Esther locked her hands tightly together, but otherwise she was calm.

"Dear Cadenus," she said earnestly, "I am very glad you told me of it. 'Tis most horrible, a nightmare fancy ; but there's no truth in it. Such false terrors will appear to us in the solitude of our own thoughts, as horrid shapes appear to children in the dark—but there's no substance in 'em. That you of all men living should fear to lose your powers of mind is indeed singular. My opinion of the matter is scarce worth your taking, but I beg of you to confide in Mr. Pope, or Dr. Arbuthnot, or some other whose judgment you value. I am confident they would tell you that for the greatest genius, the brightest wit that has adorned this age, to torment himself with the fear that his intellects are failing him, is the most preposterous fancy that ever was engendered by the spleen."

"Ay, Hesskin, ay, that they would," he answered nodding his head gloomily ; "so well have I kept my counsel. But look you, Missessy," and again he gripped her shoulder and positively shook her, "now I've told you my secret, I'll not have you treat it as the megrims of a sick girl, d'ye hear? Do you believe me such a fool as to plague and martyr myself, to refrain from pretty near everything that's sweet in life, and for years and years, the best part of a lifetime, to continue like that, and all for the sake of a fancy? By Heavens, then, you shall hear the whole truth, you shall see to the bottom of the matter, since your cursed female curiosity drives you to it! Yes, I



fear I shall end a madman.—Why?—Why? Because I am a madman already.”

His hand dropped from Esther's shoulder on to the grass. The throbbing of her pulses visibly stirred the heavy crape kerchief that covered her throat and bosom; she did not look at him at once, but bit her under-lip and knit her brow as she stared at the grass, and Swift, who usually sharply rebuked this and any other facial trick, took no notice of it. Then regarding him steadily and severely:

“I suppose, sir,” she said, “you'll be angry if I tell you you certainly talk like one. Compose yourself, I beg, and tell me what just cause you have for thinking yourself—you that's reason personified—to have lost your reason.”

Swift's gaze fell before hers; the set muscles of his frowning face relaxed, he seemed to calm himself by a mighty effort, and when he spoke again it was in his usual tone.

“‘Except I thrust my hand into the wounds’—Eh? O Didymus, Didymus!—I will then describe to you the cause and effect of my malady, as exactly as though you were a physician much wiser than any that ever yet was calved. For look you—but don't tell it to my good Arbuthnot, Hess—with their Galen and their Pharmacopœia, and their palatial wigs, these poor fellows smother up the little light of reason that Nature gave 'em. A bumpkin squire that asks the pedigree of a horse or hound before he buys it hath a better empiric judgment of things than they. I've fooled the doctor and myself so long with that tale of the surfeit of fruit I ate when I was young, and how since then I have been subject to this vomiting and giddiness in the head, that I hardly know what is the truth of the matter. But this I know,—my father's brother in Dublin, he that used me so ill when I was a lad, was subject to this same affection, and he was drivelling, raving mad for years before he died. Ay, ay, haven't I seen the crazy old villain scrambling about his fine house and beating the furniture for rage? And I used to laugh at the poor old wretch, Hess. Besides, my mother's family was said to have this curse on it: that one in every generation must drop down dead or lose his senses. Well, well! This kind of estate will not keep itself in the male line. My mother's brother killed in a fit of madness a wife he valued more than most men value theirs. Consider, Hess—to pass through a hell like that, and when you'd struggled back into the world, and lay there all faint and torn by the devils that had left you, and when you

missed the woman that should have been watching at your bedside—think of it, Hess.”

“Most sad and terrible, sir, yet not your case. And to consider the matter so nearly and your own chances of being in such a case is to invite the madness which you fear, and of which up to this present you show not the least threatening sign, but very much the contrary.”

“Ah, Hess, there’s where you err.” And he lowered his voice. “You know I never see any creature but Patrick when my head’s bad. This is why I keep Patrick, though he’s the greatest slut that wears breeches. He’s very stupid and very good-natured, and he’ll not observe or resent anything I may do; and moreover, should he talk on’t, he’s so notorious a liar that even his fellow-footmen won’t trouble to report what he tells ’em. But the truth is I am always strangely dull and cross after these bouts with my head, and sometimes, Missessy, sometimes—well, the words won’t come. I know well enough what I want, but I can’t find ’em, or I find ’em wrong. And if any one asks me the least question, as, Where is my watch? or, What is the name of my doctor? ’tis not merely that I cannot answer him, but I could kill him for anger at being asked. Yes, the least trifling word or touch may prove sufficient to transport me with rage, and though I thank the Almighty I have never yet lost control over my words or actions, He only knows when and what the end of the matter may be.”

“Dear sir,” she said, rather tremulously, and placing her hand on his, which lay on the grass, “He certainly sent you a mercy in disguise when he removed you from public affairs.”

“No, Hess!” cried Swift with animation. “There’s nothing invigorates the mind like affairs of state. My cursed luck has lain in this, that I have had to act with men that had neither common-sense nor resolution. And yet you are right, for who can deal with public affairs except through public men? And are not these altogether vanity?” He sighed dejectedly and said after a pause: “You’ll despise me now, Missessy, you’ll sneer when I talk of reason.”

Esther half rose, and it happened that in doing so she kneeled.

“I? I, Cadenus?” she asked with clasped hands: “Dear honoured—” and she raised to him the dewy brightness of her eyes and the smile of her mouth, pathetic, triumphant.

Swift looked at her kneeling so before him with a deep melancholy, through which an underlying tenderness was more

perceptible than he guessed. His character was essentially secretive, and everything in his life had tended to strengthen its natural bent. Doubtless there would be subsequent moments when he would bitterly regret having entrusted his secret to any one, but just at this moment he felt only a sense of absolute rest, of relief from a long strain. Humiliation there was none in having confessed his weakness to one whose devotion to him was inalterable, but on the contrary some indirect gratification to his self-esteem; for it is only the dull who think it more flattering to be loved for what they are fancied to be than for what they really are. The charm, the fascination of that great love which had so strangely invaded his life, came over him more strongly than ever before, and more definitely than ever before, he paused to listen to the voice of the enchantress *Might-have-been*, whose habitation is not far from that of *Giant Despair*.

"Essie," he said, "do not think me insensible to your—your great affection. O what a brute beast should I be, were it so! There are moments when I would give much to be young again, and able to forget reason and duty. They are hard masters, Hesskin, that give us nothing for our service but the need to serve 'em. Had I met such a one as you twenty years since—well, I might have been madder and more miserable and happier too, and pleaded my youth as an excuse for the wretchedness I had caused to myself and others. But now—though I should curse the hour that ever I laid on my neck the yoke of this Reason and this Duty,—which yet I am bold to say are of a nobler sort than your common church-mouse wots of—now I could not be free of it, I could not endure to kick against the pricks."

Esther, who was seated lower on the bank than himself, was now resting her elbows on the grass and leaning her head on her clasped hands in such a way that he could not see her face; only a black veil and an aureole of hair, golden in the sun.

"Cadenus," she said in a low submissive voice, "tell me—I only wish to understand. Why did reason and duty forbid you to marry, which is, I suppose, what you mean?"

"There, Hess," he returned somewhat sharply, "there you are—the voice of the world, that thinks there's no case of conscience outside the Articles and the Ten Commandments. I tell you I was poor, sick, ambitious, ill-tempered and *mad*; and I am now a little less poor, much less ambitious, but sick, ill-tempered, and a great deal more mad, besides being old. Had I married I

should now be in Bedlam, and my wife a beggar as my own mother was, and my children a pack of miserable beggars such as I was, and with the same curse on them. I know not whether the folly or the crime of it would have been greater."

"But, sir," she resumed more pleadingly, "'twould sure be much better for you to have a woman to tend you, when you were sick, than a rough footman, whom you yourself say is dull."

"A woman, Hess? What woman? A wife, d'ye mean, to pry and gaze upon me, and go whisper of the poor Doctor and his fits with the dear goodies her neighbours? You think she wouldn't? I tell you this, Missessy, I know no woman of sense or spirit who'd bear to be used as I use Patrick at times without resentment; 'twould not be in human nature that she should. She'd grow to detest and to despise her husband, and she'd always be watching him to see if the fit was coming on. I promise you, when we had a difference of opinion, she'd remember my wits were not always as clear as they should be. Why, the very thought of it would be enough to drive me stark staring mad."

There was silence, and then he resumed in a very gentle voice, that markedly contrasted with the sharpness of his preceding tone.

"I confess, Essie, that you dealt with me, you tamed me better than I could have thought possible, the only time you ever saw me in my sickness. Yet 'twas but a touch of it, a threatening, that day—you know when I mean, don't you?—in Bury Street, on your cousin's wedding-day. I'm glad 'twas no worse. I could not have borne you to see me worse. You'd hate and despise me if you did. Yet, little Hesskin, I have often thought of it since when I've had a bad fit, and been fool enough to fancy you'd have tended me when I was roaring with pain more cleverly than Patrick, and set me down too when I got angry—just made me remember myself, and keep quiet. I never thought a woman could have set me down when I needed it as you do, Essie, and I not resent it."

The cup of Esther's emotion was already brimming, and at this acknowledgment it overflowed. In another moment she was fallen across his feet, clinging to them, crushing her soft arms and bosom and fine crape against them, not indeed shedding tears, but sobbing passionately between her almost inaudible words.

"Then why mayn't I serve you? I only want to serve you. You say I do it better than Patrick, and yet you won't let me.

Why? I see no reason. It would be kinder to let me come, and if you killed me—if you should kill some one, it had better be me, for I should not care—it would not hurt me half so much as your killing, killing words and your sending me away. How can you dream that anything on earth could alter you to me—make you one whit less loved, less honoured? You've cut me to the soul in telling me of your affliction, and you ought to let me share it. I have a right to share it."

Swift drew her gently up till she was kneeling again, but this time nearer to him, and as he laid his hand on her two clasped hands, her eyes were but little below his own. It was a long, a deeply agitated and melancholy look, that he allowed himself into those pleading eyes. It was all that and more. Esther's violent sobs had ceased, though her lips still trembled.

"Impossible," he said at length.

There was one obstacle to the accomplishment of Esther's desires which he did not mention, and which might not have seemed to every one, as it did to him, the most insuperable.

Those other obstacles between him and marriage he had always before found enough, yet now it is possible that they might have been swept away by the onrush of a stronger tide than any they had yet had to resist, had it not been for this hidden barrier.

That was firmly fixed in his mind, and moreover could he have brought himself to discover it to Essie, she also would have recognized its inflexible nature. The tender blameless ties which had bound him for so many years to Esther Johnson, did not imply marriage with her, but they forbade marriage with another. He was too upright to plead before the tribunal of his conscience the absence of any agreement between them, yet he could not bring himself to allow her claims to another, to acknowledge in so many words that he was not a free man. It was only since his relations to Esther Vanhomrigh had become disquieting that he had put these claims before himself, and it was against his nature, his feeling at the moment and all the traditions of his life to explain them to Essie. He pretended to himself that the secret was Esther Johnson's more than his own, and therefore he could not honourably divulge it to any one, least of all to another woman, who would no doubt take a conventional view of the matter and refuse to regard him as bound by ties so singular and so informal. Probably she would make imputations on Mrs. Johnson's character, if she knew



that Pdf r. shared his income with Ppt.; and without telling that, the whole of his obligations in the matter would not be clear. It was not now that these thoughts came into his mind in any sequence; he had had but too much occasion for them before, and the sum of them was already there, both for good and for evil.

"Impossible," he said; loyal with all the strength of his will and his judgment to Esther Johnson, and a long past that was his own and hers, even while his arm was round that other Esther, who had grown too dear to him, and whose face was lifted to his so childlike, soft, and fair, so beautifully transparent in the light of a passion that was as innocent as it was measureless. The colour which had returned to Esther's cheek beneath that long look ebbed again. She withdrew her hands and sat down a little way off him.

"If you do not love me," she said, "why do you tell me your secrets?"

"Good God, Essie!" cried Swift, and took his hat off his head and dashed it on to the ground; "what in Heaven's name can I say to you?"

Then he edged up nearer to her, and laying his hand once more on her two clasped ones:

"Hess," he said solemnly, "you are dearer to me than any living creature; you are of all women her whom I most esteem and adore. For God's sake be content with this, and cease to torture one that loves you but too sincerely. My resolution is taken, and has been taken for as many years as you have been in this most unhappy world. Either we part for ever here and now, or you pledge me your word—I know 'tis sacred—that you will, without further questioning of my reasons, accept my inalterable determination. If in poetry Cadenus has spoken less plainly, has appeared to vacillate in this matter, why, Vanessa knows better than any one that poets play strange tricks with the truth, even when they pretend to tell it. The Dean says plainly to his dear, dearest friend, that her lover he has not been, nor will be; her husband he cannot, nor ever can be; her friend he has been, is, and will be to the end of his miserable days. Do you promise, Missessy?"

Esther was silent a little; then in a low deliberate voice:

"I cannot promise to be content," she answered.

Swift rose to his feet. He dared not look down at Esther; he looked through the tall hedge-row elms away to the downs.

"Then farewell, child, farewell!" he said hastily; "and God bless you!" Esther seized his coat.

"Stop!" she cried, she too springing to her feet, "I did not mean that. Wait till I tell you what I mean. I wish to say that I do not see how any mortal can promise what they will feel or think. Alas! Who would invite their own thoughts and feelings could they foresee them?"

"Who, indeed!" groaned Swift.

"And I cannot promise not to reproach you, should you behave ill to me, for I could not avoid doing so."

Swift smiled a grim, melancholy smile.

"No, Governor Huff, on my conscience I do not believe you could. You speak the truth as usual, Missessy, and having been so honest as to tell me what you cannot promise, pray now tell me if there is anything you can?"

Esther paused, and then spoke with her eyes on the ground.

"I promise to restrain my feelings as much as lies in my power, and I also promise never again to—to—" she hesitated, then looking him in the face, she continued in a clear steady voice, "never to attempt by word or deed to make you alter your determination."

"Well said! Well said, child!" he cried. "I applaud your resolution. Believe me, by restraining an inclination we get completely the better of it in time." And smiling somewhat ironically: "I once loved figs, you know, and now can see 'em without the least desire to taste 'em."

"Have you promised me anything in return?" asked Esther gravely, without noticing this philosophical reflection, which its author had perhaps addressed more to himself than to her.

"Yes," he returned as gravely; "give me your hand." She did so. "I promise you, Essie," he said, "a most tender and devoted and constant friendship, from this day to the day of my death, which I pray the Almighty may not be a very great way off. Amen."

He held her hand a moment longer. Then:

"Let us go on," he said. "Moll will be expecting us."

The silence which followed as they walked side by side in the direction of Wantage was instinct with calm happiness to Esther. Whatever she might feel in the future about the compact into which they had entered and the manner in which Swift fulfilled his part of it, just now it seemed very sweet and sacred. For Swift that silence was full of inward debate.

"I have surely sacrificed this poor child and my own inclinations sufficiently," he protested to himself. "A man is not bound to be the friend of one woman only, as he is bound to be the husband of one wife only." And yet a voice went on repeating with a monotonous cuckoo-cry: "P d fr. does not love P pt. Poor P pt!" And all love and all affection, and the very bond into which he had just entered, seemed to him dust and ashes, mocked as they were by this *memento mori*, this ghost of sweet things dead.

They walked thus in silence for awhile, and then Swift began once more to discuss the tangled business affairs of the Vanhomrigh family. Ginckel was still in Paris, alleging fifty reasons why his successful courtship of the rich widow could not be brought to a crisis. Meantime he was indignant at his appropriation of Molly's money being called anything but a loan to which he had a right.

"Why do you not apply to Cousin Purvis?" asked Swift.

"The poor lady has had a stroke of the palsy, and has lost her senses for the present," replied Esther. "Besides, our poor mamma applied to her so often that I believe I should have been ashamed to."

"And Ford? How did Ford behave?" asked he. Esther shrugged her shoulders.

"O, like other people—shabbily."

"I am sorry to hear it," returned he. "Before I left town I thought him sincerely attached to Mollkin."

"He left a formal condolence at the door. 'Tis all we have heard of him these two months."

"Shabby, very shabby," repeated Swift. "Yet I think myself exceedingly foolish in continuing to be surprised at the baseness of mankind."

"To do him justice, I do not think 'twas the ill report of our money matters kept him away. But I wish there were some sumptuary law, whereby the common mob of sentiments should be forbid to wear names that are too fine for 'em. No matter. We have had the pleasure of proving that we possess two or three friends; and those that never knew misfortune or calumny cannot swear to so many."

"Very justly said, miss! Ah! 'Tis an ill world."

Esther smiled.

"I thought it so, sir, some hours back, but find it now wonderfully changed for the better."

When they had arrived at the Bear Inn, had passed up the stairs, and stood at the Miss Vanhomrighs' parlour door, Esther paused.

"Pray do not remark on Molly's sick looks," she said anxiously.

"Hath she never a jest left in her composition?" asked Swift.

"Some folks can jest on the rack," returned Esther. "But I doubt their jests are but a more courageous kind of groan, and they give me no pleasure to hear."

When they opened the door, the first thing they saw was a crooked little gentleman, huddled up in the corner of a large chair. He rose as they entered, and advancing upon the Dean with open arms, embraced him as heartily as their respective heights allowed.

"Pope!" cried Swift, half pleased, half vexed. "You here! I never thought to see you till Friday."

Then he turned to Molly, and with difficulty repressed an expression of pain and surprise, so terribly changed and thin did she look in her heavy mourning.

Mr. Pope, who was staying at Stanton Harcourt, was to spend two days with Swift at Letcombe Bassett, and the chaise was being got ready; so very soon the two gentlemen took their leave. Essie stood at the foot of the stairs, looking out into the inn-yard to see them depart. They had made their adieux, and Mr. Pope was already in the chaise, when Swift came up to her again, hat in hand.

"Good-bye, Hess," he said. "'Tis very uncertain when we shall meet again, but I will write to you when the occasion offers. I go to Ireland shortly. When do you return to London?"

"I do not know," replied Esther hesitatingly. "Seeing how our affairs stand there and in Dublin, 'tis more likely we also shall go to Ireland."

He stood silent; then clapping his hat on his head:

"You should not for the world have come here," he cried. "No, indeed you should not!"

THE END OF PART I.

(To be continued.)

## HOW THE POOR LIVE.



THE consolidation of the Sanitary Acts into the Public Health (London) Act, following upon the codification of the Artizan Dwellings and Lodging House Acts into a single statute, marks, it may be hoped, the beginning of a new departure in the administration of the laws regulating the health and homes of the working classes. The London County Council and the district and parochial authorities can, at any rate, no longer pretend that their efforts are hampered by the difficulty of putting a complex machinery in motion, now that we have bidden good-bye to the old jumble of enactments. Nor, with the first two volumes of Mr. Charles Booth's monumental work on "The Labour and Life of the People" before them, can they plead ignorance as an excuse for doing nothing. Central and local authorities are no longer able to quarrel as to the fitness of Torrens's Acts or Cross's Acts in any particular case, and so seek to shift the responsibility of taking action on to each other's shoulders. The law, whatever its defects may prove to be, is at least homogeneous. It is contained within the four corners of a couple of statutes. It is, at the same time, idle to hope that the regeneration of the homes of the working classes will be brought about forthwith. Much still remains to be done. The London County Council has an onerous and thankless task. The Vestries and District Boards have to accept the *locus pœnitentiæ* remaining to them. In the provinces again we shall have to witness a great change in the administration of the law before we can hope for fruits.

London, it cannot be too frequently repeated, stands almost alone in this matter. The Metropolis is an expression which comes glibly to the mouth, but it is often more than doubtful whether it possesses any definite meaning. Everybody, it is somewhat rashly assumed, can "locate" it correctly. But for a



definition we must go back to the Act which created the Metropolitan Board of Works. If you take a map of London and its environs and connect for yourself the parishes scheduled in the Metropolis Local Management Acts, you will find that they are contained in an irregular dodecagon, of which the points are, Stoke Newington, Stratford, Woolwich, Plumstead, Eltham, Lewisham, Penge, Tooting, Roehampton, Hammersmith, Paddington, and Hampstead. This is, roughly speaking, the County of London. In other words, we have to deal with a tract of "country" in the counties of Middlesex, Essex, Kent, and Surrey, containing an area of 75,462 acres, and inhabited by a population of more than four million souls.

But if we can understand the Metropolitan area geographically, it is all but impossible to grasp its integral actuality. Nor can we instantly appreciate the innumerable influences which ceaselessly act and re-act upon its inhabitants. Waves of migration and emigration mark one unending round of revolution—economic, industrial, social. It is a mighty human ocean where surging tides are ever flowing, ever ebbing. London possesses no sort of homogeneity. As Mr. Charles Booth shows, the conditions are not the same in, perhaps, any two parishes. It would, taking the inquiry still further afield, be futile, and worse than futile, to enforce the same rules in the smiling lanes and thriving villages of the Kent and Surrey suburbs, as in the "slums" and "rookeries" of Mile-End and Clerkenwell. There is little in common between Roehampton and Rotherhithe, Sydenham and Shoreditch. Bermondsey has needs unknown to Bayswater. It is therefore impossible to deal with London merely parochially. If you look at the map you will see that London parishes largely resemble the spokes of a wheel. Almost without exception they run outwards from the Central Ring. In other words, in most of them we have to deal with totally different conditions. Rules and regulations which are perfectly well adapted for central areas are totally inapplicable in the Outer Ring. The attempts to regenerate London have failed because they have been applied to the existing divisions. The new departure which is needed is to parcel out the Metropolis into a series of concentric belts.

Ways and means, sooner or later, come to the front in all projects aiming at the reformation of the health and homes of the poor. Under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, as under all its predecessors, pounds, shillings, and pence will prove the chief difficulty. Nobody can get up the least

enthusiasm for the financial methods of the Metropolitan Board of Works. Their administration of Cross's Acts was, in more ways than one, nothing short of a disgrace to the Metropolitan community. And by no means the least of the evils this entailed was the enormous expense to which it put Metropolitan ratepayers.

The most remarkable feature of that body's finance perhaps was that the "Estimated Cost" bore no relation whatever to the actual cost of each scheme, *even after deducting the value of the land unlet*. Two or three examples will be enough by way of warning. The Whitecross Street Scheme, St. Luke's, cost £314,631, although estimated at £98,786, a little less than a quarter; the Whitechapel and Limehouse Scheme cost £151,118, while the estimate was only £54,400, little more than a third; the ill-omened Goulston Street and Flower-and-Dean Street Scheme cost £279,640, estimate £147,773, barely a half; and, again, the High Street, Islington, and Essex Road Schemes cost £135,917, estimate £85,060. These examples could, of course, be easily multiplied, but they throw a useful sidelight upon the liabilities to which the London County Council succeeded, and indicate the dangers of wholesale and sensational action. It must be confessed that all these schemes were carried out in the infancy of Cross's Acts, that many changes have since then been made in the law with the intention of reducing the cost within reasonable limits. But, nevertheless, the London County Council has embarked upon an undertaking in Bethnal Green which will involve an outlay of £300,000, although affecting a population of only 5700. The Board were content first to waste the money of the public, and then to quote figures as an excuse for not putting the Acts in force more effectively. Thus, taking six schemes, we find the estimates amount to £237,340, and the total cost to the 29th of February, 1888, to £47,927. What the actual cost will be it would be rash to conjecture here, but it may be worth the while of the London County Council to ascertain without any great delay. Only £243 had been paid of the £46,300 at which the Cable Street, Limehouse, Scheme (which was agreed to in 1886), was priced; only £304 had then been advanced towards the £55,550, the estimated cost of the area in Shelton Street, Parker Street, Macklin Street, Drury Lane, Kennedy Court, Star Court, Cross Lane and Chapel Yard, St. Giles', also begun in 1886. It is a mere commonplace to remark that the expense of carrying out this legislation must

always be very serious. London must wait for many of those reforms which are so loudly clamoured for by amateur philanthropists until London is prepared to pay for the luxury. But the London County Council would do well to ascertain clearly what is its "mandate" in this particular before it commits itself to any ruinous outlay. The one thing to be guarded against is a repetition of the costly experiments of the old Board of Works. The regeneration of London will not be accomplished by crude or heroic finance.

The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, is, we need scarcely insist, a consolidating Act. It initiated little fresh legislation, but mainly attempted to reconcile the inconsistencies of the existing law, and to supply patent defects in the existing machinery for carrying that law into effect. It is too avowedly experimental, incorporating, as it does, many suggestions of the Royal Commission, with the object of showing practically how far these can obviate the great evils that have undoubtedly been proved to exist. The failure of the Act of 1885 (and that it did fail there is overwhelming evidence) prevents one from feeling confident that the Act of 1890 will prove wholly successful. It was shown in the First Report of the Commissioners that this question was inseparably connected with the reform of local government. Again and again that Report alluded to the difficulty of dealing with any of these problems, either in towns or in urban or rural districts, so long as the system of local administration remained in its present form; and, with a prescience which seems to have been prophetic, the failure of the remedies proposed was predicted unless and until this was remodelled. Now that the County Council has entered upon its work in real earnest, it is therefore of the first moment that it should appreciate the weak points in the old system of local management, as shown by the working of the laws affecting the health and homes of the poor.

The seven parts into which the Act is divided deal, respectively, with, (1) Unhealthy areas; (2) Unhealthy dwelling houses; (3) Lodging houses; (4) Supplemental matters; (5) Scotland; (6) Ireland; (7) Repeal and temporary provisions. In other words, it incorporated the main provisions of the Artizans' Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875-1882, better known as Cross's Acts; the Artizans' Dwellings Acts, 1868-1882, better known as Torrens's Acts; and the Labouring Classes' Lodging Houses Acts, 1851-1867, with which is associated the name of Lord

Shaftesbury. The Act repealed all these statutes as well as the Act of 1885 *in toto*, re-enacting by incorporation, with sundry amendments and additions, their more important provisions.

It may be confidently stated that, as regards the clearance of large and small insanitary areas and the demolition of unwholesome dwellings, little has been done during the last five years. In many of the slums of London the owners of dilapidated property have been stirred up to repair, and even rebuild, in view of the confiscatory powers of the Acts. Cleanliness, too, on the part of the occupiers is much more general, although the fact might not strike everybody in the same light ; and the elements of sanitary science are, perhaps, more widely known, if not very heartily appreciated. But there is not a little danger that much of this improvement will be very evanescent. "Tenement-mongers" have too long successfully traded upon the shortcomings of the law to be restrained otherwise than by a strong hand. The neglect of the local authorities to enforce divers provisions of the Act of 1885 is not likely to be perpetuated by the London County Council under the Act of 1890.

The Metropolitan Board, as every one knows, was the authority for putting into operation Cross's Acts, under which areas could be dealt with where the "houses are not so structurally defective as to be incapable of repair, and so ill-placed with reference to each other as to require, to bring them up to a proper sanitary standard, nothing short of demolition and reconstruction." Torrens's Acts, on the other hand, under which single houses or comparatively small groups of houses could be compulsorily repaired or demolished "when unfit for human habitation," were under the local authority. As the First Report on the Housing of the Poor somewhat roughly put it, "Torrens's Acts do for small areas what Cross's Acts do for large areas." Now the Act of 1885 amended both these groups of statutes on much the same lines, and they have been incorporated in this form in the Act of 1890. An official representation has to be addressed by the Medical Officer of Health to the local authority (that is, for the Metropolis the County Council, and for the City the Commissioners of Sewers) as to any area that is unhealthy in whole or in part. If approved by the County Council, the scheme has to be confirmed upon petition by the Local Government Board by Order, which has to be sanctioned by Parliament. In short, the procedure is practically the same as under the old Acts, so that we cannot hope for any

great change with regard to the reduction of the initial cost to result from the new statute. It is, of course, necessary to institute safeguards against extravagant reforms by providing for due inquiry, but it may be remarked that these could have been made a little less cumbersome without loss of efficiency. Still if the economies of the Act are disappointing, it at least touches the fringe of the difficulty by dealing on drastic lines with the vexed question of compensation.

In providing that no "unearned increment" that may have accrued in consequence of the premises being used for any illegal purposes, or being so overcrowded as to be injurious to the health of the inmates, shall be taken into account in fixing the amount of compensation, it removes one of the great obstacles to the clearance of insanitary property. This goes much further than the Act of 1879, which merely enabled the arbitrator to deduct the estimated cost of abating any nuisance shown to exist in any premises from the sum payable by way of compensation.

The Act, moreover, initiated a great and promising reform in the law by providing for those cases which fall neither under Cross's Acts nor Torrens's Acts. The necessity for this was urgent. There had long been a standing feud between the Metropolitan Board and the Vestries and District Boards as to the respective scope of their powers. The Board, in reply to a large number of official representations addressed to them, used one of two stereotyped formulas. If a scheme could not be strangled by the verdict, "Too small; should be dealt with locally," it was often effectually scotched by the lucid observation, "The Board is of opinion that the area does not come within the scope of the Act of 1875, but should be dealt with by some other means."

This "borderland of action," as it was termed in the First Report (although it would have been more correctly described as "inaction"), between the central and the local authorities, was pointed out in 1884 as requiring "immediate attention." "Places," ran the Report, "which are notoriously bad, remain so because each authority maintains that the other authority ought to deal with them; the real contention between them being whether the improvement, *the necessity of which is disputed by neither*, ought to be carried out at the expense of the Metropolis, or at the expense of the immediate locality." In the event of the local authority declining or neglecting for the space of three months after notice from the Board above to use Torrens's



Acts, the Board might themselves, under the Act of 1879, have put their provisions in force and charged the local authority with the expense. But it was shown in 1884 that this power had never been exercised, nor has it since been exercised. The old policy, in short, prevailed to the end. Many areas, which medical officers had made the subject of "representations," were duly declared by the Board to be "too small for a scheme." Now as to size, it may be well, in these days of big things, to remark that there was, prior to 1882, no limit whatever as to the areas in which Cross's Acts might be adopted. In that year the minimum was fixed at ten, rather superfluously, since the Board would not "look at" a scheme involving less than a hundred houses. The least consideration shows that this was a most mischievous rule. Under Cross's Acts it is possible to deal with areas as "structurally defective" which cannot be condemned under Torrens's Acts as "unfit for human habitation." It is easy to understand how imperative it is that much old-house property in the Metropolis should be swept away in the interests of the public health, although the rate of mortality among the inhabitants may not be abnormally high. Yet because of this hitch in many bad cases nothing has been done. No fewer than 198 small insanitary areas were brought under the notice of the Housing Committee of the Council during its first year of working.

Under Part II. of the Act of 1890, however, the local authority, that is, the Vestry or District Board, can prepare a scheme for dealing with any areas which are too small to be dealt with as "unhealthy areas" under Part I. of the Act, subject to the approval of the Local Government Board. The London County Council, again, when an official representation does not relate to more than ten houses, is to direct the case to be referred to the district authority, which is, apparently, under compulsion to deal with it as an "intermediate scheme." Its future action in this direction will be watched with curious interest.

This brings us to the great innovation of the statute, or what may almost be called its principle. For the Act throws upon the local authority the positive duty of setting unhealthy dwellings in order, or seeing them abolished. Part II. of the Act (which includes, as we have said, the Artizans and Labourers' Dwellings Acts, 1868-1879, commonly known as Torrens's Acts), if efficiently worked, should do much to regenerate London. Designed for the gradual improvement of unhealthy dwellings

by repair, or where this was inadequate or impracticable, by demolition, these Acts have largely failed, owing to their permissive character. The local or district authorities gladly availed themselves of any valid excuse for neglecting to enforce their powers.

Now the local government of London is still, for the purposes of Part II. of the Act, vested in twenty-three vestries, and fifteen district Boards of Works. There is a wide distinction between these bodies. District Boards, for instance, almost invariably, compare favourably with vestries, and so form valuable examples in favour of Mr. Ritchie's projected District Councils. The representatives returned to them from the smaller parishes show, in general, much more public spirit than mere vestrymen. Nor are the vestries equally bad. Some are highly efficient, if not very enlightened bodies, which are well and faithfully served. But although these distinctions have found illustration in the spirit in which their statutory powers under various Acts are carried out, there is room for improvement all round. The ordinary practice was to only proceed under the Acts as a last resource. In many districts the authorities have served notices upon owners and occupiers which are quite irregular. The various Nuisances Removal Acts are, in others, employed for all sorts of purposes. Torrens's Acts have, to say the least, always been exceedingly unpopular. In those cases in which they were used it was almost invariably in order to secure the execution of repairs, and often "ornamental repairs." The objection to enforcing demolition on the ground that it is confiscatory became equally effectual as the old excuse of expense.

Again, the *ratio decidendi* under Torrens's Acts was, as we have explained, that the houses should be "unfit for human habitation." This is, of course, a question within the province of the Medical Officer of Health. But, in practice, the district surveyor possesses, and often exercises, a veto upon the orders of the Medical Officer, the consequence of this conflict of authority often being that little or nothing is done where much ought to be done. These considerations explain the continued existence of the large numbers of unhealthy houses and small insanitary areas which one finds with such facility all London over. It is hardly denied that much of this property is practically incapable of repair. It is, of course, always possible to botch up dilapidations and so make a place "eyeable," and

thereby still more dangerous to health and to life. Much has been done in this way within the last few years. Houses which are rotten from age, or because, although they are comparatively new, they have been run up by "jerry builders," have again and again been condemned and spared. This is the more to be regretted since there are not the same cogent objections to the demolition of single houses or small groups of houses as to large clearances. The displacement of population is, comparatively, so small, and can be effected so gradually, that the consequent hardship and misery among the dispossessed inhabitants would reach almost an irreducible minimum. There are few more mischievous fallacies than those underlying the notion that the regeneration of the homes of the London poor can only be accomplished by heroic measures. The London County Council has, therefore, no lack of opportunities within the limits of practical reform, and under existing statutory powers. To merely require the district authorities to apply Part II. of the new Act would do an immense amount of good.

Since the statute is compulsory in this respect, there seems little reason to fear that it will fail in its effect. Thus the Medical Officer of Health of every district is by Section 30 compelled to "represent" any dwelling house which appears to him to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation. Any four householders can, too, under Section 31 set the machinery in motion. A Medical Officer, again, is required to make a representation to the local authority in the case of obstructive buildings as stopping ventilation, or otherwise making other buildings unfit for habitation or injurious to health, while any four householders can make a direct representation on similar grounds. In default of any action on the part of the local authority, the London County Council can make an order and take the necessary proceedings, or do the necessary work and surcharge the local authority with the expense. But that is not all. By Section 32 it is provided that "it shall be the duty of every local authority to cause to be made from time to time inspection of their district, with a view to ascertain whether any dwelling house therein is in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation." Every possible contingency seems to have been provided for to obviate any danger that these provisions will remain a dead-letter. It is incredible that neither the local authority, the health officer, nor even four of

the inhabitants of a district can be induced to take action if there is the least necessity for any being taken.

Let us now look at Part III. of the Act which incorporates the Labouring Classes' Lodging Houses Act, 1851-1867. The First Report dwelt at considerable length upon the urgent necessity which had been shown to exist for tenement houses, and the Commissioners were much impressed with Lord Shaftesbury's Act, which seemed to provide, ready to hand, the required remedy. That Act, it was proved, had never come into operation at all, owing to constructive defects in its machinery. Nor can this be wondered at. Up to that time, in order to bring it into force in any district, (1) a vestry meeting for the special purpose had to be called on the requisition of ratepayers, and if two-thirds in value of the votes of the vestry on the question decided to adopt the Act, (2) the vestry had to get the approval of the Secretary of State, and (3) to appoint certain ratepayers as commissioners who might borrow money on the mortgage of the rates, with the approval of the vestry and of the Treasury, and apply it to the erection of lodging houses for the working classes. They might, too, from time to time make such alterations and improvements in the dwellings as were necessary. The land on which these were to be built might be obtained either by appropriating to the purpose parish lands, or by purchasing or renting grounds. The Commissioners, always with the sanction of the vestry and the Treasury, might purchase or lease existing lodging houses and undertake their management under byelaws of their own, which, amongst other things, fixed the rent. In urban sanitary districts, on the other hand, only the sanitary authority were empowered to carry the Act into execution, "one-tenth in value" of the persons liable to be rated to a general district or improvement rate having power to postpone the question to the next election of members of the authority. Improvement Commissioners, moreover, could not determine upon the adoption of the Acts without the sanction of the "major part in value" of the persons liable to be rated present in meeting assembled. This much detail seems to be necessary in order to explain the original failure of this enactment, *which had never been put into force.*

Now Lord Shaftesbury declared before the Commissioners that if the Act was put into operation it would meet almost everything that was then required, and that it contained powers which would remedy the greater part of the evils existing. The

Commissioners, moreover, reported that, "looking at the powers which are conferred on a local authority by the Act where it has been adopted, it seems that Lord Shaftesbury's belief in its efficiency is not merely based on the natural favour with which a legislator regards his own productions." They accordingly recommended that "the Act should be made in London *Metropolitan instead of parochial*," and that, "as long as the government of London remains in its present form, the Metropolitan Board of Works should be the body entrusted with its execution." These recommendations, amongst others, were carried out in the Act of 1885, and re-enacted in 1890.

As the law stands, therefore, Lord Shaftesbury's Acts may be adopted by the London County Council, with, we imagine, the sanction of the Secretary of State. The authority of the Metropolitan Board of Works and, therefore, of the London County Council under the Metropolis Management Act, 1855, was expressly extended for the purposes of the Act of 1851, so that all the expenses of its adoption are to be defrayed out of the Dwelling House Improvement Fund, and the financial difficulty can thus be, temporarily, got over. In short, in the place of the old ridiculous and impossible procedure, a simple and intelligible system has been instituted, while, at the same time, abundant safeguards are retained to prevent the scheme from being improperly used or abused. The London County Council and the Secretary of State are not very likely to apply it except in cases in which it is really required and in suitable districts. It is interesting to know that these powers have been put into force, and that an attempt is being made to give effect to the suggestions of the Commissioners and the provisions of the Legislature by endeavouring to provide in this way deficiencies in the supply of tenement houses. The great "dossing" enterprise of the Council in St. Giles' is, at any rate tentatively, a step forward. It is not likely to be forgotten that there are a large number of vacant sites at the disposal of the Council, and unless the Act of 1890 is to remain, *pro tanto*, a dead-letter, that enterprising body cannot do better than give its sections 53-71 a practical trial. There are those who even urge that this can be done to pay.

The importance of these considerations will be appreciated when it is remembered that the very difficulty which has arisen was anticipated by some of the Commissioners. Mr. Goschen, Mr. Lyulph Stanley, and the late Mr. Samuel Morley, in a joint



memorandum, appended to the First Report, distinguished between giving the local authority power to build under exceptional circumstances, or under Cross's and Torrens's Acts, on limited areas, and general and unlimited powers for the erection of houses for the poor.

"It is proposed in the Report," this memorandum goes on, "that Lord Shaftesbury's Act should be made Metropolitan instead of parochial. This means that the central municipal authority is to have powers for erecting working-class dwellings in all parts of the Metropolis. Is it to be a *duty* on the part of this authority to put the Act in force, and, if so, in all parts of the town where such additional accommodation is needed, or only in some? And if the cost is to be charged on the whole Metropolis, would not the duty have to be performed everywhere where necessary, a process so difficult, and involving such vast expenditure, that it is not likely to be undertaken at all? We are disposed to think that as the existing Act, with its parochial limitations, has remained a dead-letter since 1887, so, if it were applied to the Metropolis as a whole, it would similarly disappoint expectation."

This is forcible reasoning, and, judging by results, the prediction was prophetic. But the Act of 1885, nevertheless, gave effect to the recommendation that a trial should be given to these powers, and notwithstanding the reservations of individual commissioners, there is no justification for the contemptuous indifference with which its provisions in this direction have been met. There has been, on the one hand, in several Metropolitan districts a dearth of tenement houses of the right type, and, on the other, a machinery specially constructed to meet this particular phase of the difficulty, possibly capable of great results, and that machinery has remained idle and untried. But the importance of a change in this respect has already been recognised. Mr. Ritchie, during debate in the Commons, has dwelt with special emphasis upon the powers possessed by the London County Council under the Acts of 1851 and 1885 to "hire, purchase, erect, furnish, manage, and let houses as lodgings for the working classes," and has strongly urged their being made the most of. This is, therefore, one of the directions in which a new departure was confidently looked for, so that it is idle to object to it as socialistic in principle. The success of the municipal lodging houses at Glasgow seems to justify hopes that similar institutions will succeed in London.

From all this it will be seen that the Act makes a distinct advance. Much yet remains to be done, but now much more can be done than has hitherto been practicable. Such a work as this, however—it need not be laboured—can only be accomplished by the aid of the most exact local knowledge. Local Reports are useless unless verified by outside evidence such as a roving Commission could secure, and this would possess advantages not enjoyed by the four geographical sub-committees of the Committee of the Council. Most district returns are absolutely misleading. The most unhealthy conditions will, indeed, be found to exist where they are least suspected. It is a startling fact, which inquiry upon the spot distinctly verifies, that at the present time, while much of East London has been improved out of recognition, very gross evils still exist in the heart of the West-end. In Mayfair (close to Grosvenor Square) and St. James's there are at the present moment many working people herded in cellars and kitchens in defiance of all regulations. These dens are commonly let with an upper room, and since not "occupied separately as a dwelling," the law is defeated. Overcrowding in its most acute form results naturally from the conditions under which the West-end poor live, and the mere immunity of fashionable neighbourhoods from the amateur sanitarians who make the work of East-end authorities a burden to them tends to produce a general belief that they are free from the dangers and difficulties which exist east of the City. Yet the truth is, that although the conditions differ, the problem presented for solution is, perhaps, most difficult as regards West London. The working classes, whose work lies in the West-end, are, in most respects, even worse off than their comrades of the East.

Another point which lies at the fringe of the difficulty is the necessity which compels large populations who work in the markets, docks, or centres of supply and employment, to live as near as possible to the scene of their matutinal labours. Each of the Metropolitan markets is a focus of congestion. Covent Garden is, perhaps, the worst of all in this respect. Here are dozens of courts which are densely crowded under conditions as bad as any of those which shock humanitarians in Spitalfields and Bethnal Green. And both the Strand District Board of Works and the vestry of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields have practically acquiesced in this state of things. This evil must exist in greater or lesser degree wherever the population far exceeds the

accommodation of the area. But can it be pretended that it cannot be palliated? Look at what has been accomplished in St. Giles's and Bedfordbury, and contrast it with the wretchedness and misery which here still remain unheeded. It is nothing short of a national scandal that every means known to the law has not been employed to compel the owners to sweep away these rookeries and put up habitations in which porters and labourers can afford to live. As for the rent paid for the present filthy hovels, it seems incredible that the figures are not exaggerated. But an exhaustive investigation, as we have suggested, by a roving Commission would settle these doubts. Is not the cause of overcrowding in such areas as these properly a matter for national interference? It is essential in the interests of the community that work should go on at the docks and in the markets, and the workers have a right to claim protection from the artificial value which is thus put upon the wretched accommodation of the neighbourhood. The markets, we are told, cannot be changed. Then we must change their surroundings. Each district must, in short, be dealt with in the light of local needs. The problem is not homogeneous, but it is not insoluble.

Miss Octavia Hill has a right to a hearing on a question with which she has herself grappled, perhaps more successfully than any other present-day philanthropist. It is not wholly surprising to know that Miss Hill, in common with many others whose lives are spent in the midst of the people, is by no means enthusiastic in favour of "model dwellings." Nothing is more certain than that life in blocks is absolutely intolerable to the lower strata of humanity, and Miss Hill declares that "often with a very fair show to the outsider, the block becomes a sort of pandemonium." \* But this is merely a part of the great difficulty of all, the treatment of the helpless class, which, as Mr. Booth shows, "hangs fatally round the necks of the classes just above it," which is "industrially valueless and socially pernicious." No scheme yet devised has touched even the outskirts of the vicious and the casual poor. It is more than doubtful whether each in succession has not actually degraded their environment.

W. MORRIS COLLES.

\* "Labour and Life of the People," vol. ii. p. 265.

## A MAIDEN SPEECH.

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### CHAPTER I.

"TOM ought to be here by now," said Lady Cecilia, glancing at her watch, and then looking out of the window.

"I dare say he won't be much longer," said Miss Sinclair, in a tranquil tone. "Very likely it isn't all over yet." But she took a stealthy glance at the clock on the mantel-piece, and made a little gesture of impatience.

"He said he would be here by four," Lady Cecilia rejoined, "and it is now nearly half-past. Can anything have gone wrong?"

Miss Sinclair did not reply; but after a little while she said—

"This may turn out to be an eventful day in your brother's history, my dear. In years to come he may look back on the day when he first entered the House of Commons, and think of how he hoped to make a name and have a career. But perhaps your brother doesn't indulge in such visions."

Lady Cecilia looked at her friend quickly.

"Edith, you mustn't think Tom is indifferent because he doesn't say much. He is like most Englishmen, and hates to show his feelings. But I am sure he does feel—he is ambitious, I know. Don't you think so too?"

"I hope so certainly," said Miss Sinclair.

"He may do great things," Lady Cecilia continued; "have a career, as you say. And if he does, you will know that you were the cause of it all. He would never have gone into Parliament if you hadn't wanted him to. He is doing it just to please you."

Miss Sinclair smiled and blushed a little. Lady Cecilia's words were pleasant to listen to; but she felt that she must make some protest.

"I am afraid that is a wrong motive," she said. "He ought to do it for the love of his country, not out of regard for me."

But I am glad he has entered public life, any way. It is dreadful to me to see a man who could do better, wasting all his time as so many men do. Your brother has talent, you know."

"Oh, yes," said Lady Cecilia hastily; "Tom has talent, though he seems anxious to appear as stupid as he can."

It is possible Miss Sinclair might have protested against this as an exaggeration, had it not been for the arrival of the gentleman under discussion.

The Hon. Thomas Chillingham Walcot Barracliffe, or, as his friends called him, Tom Barracliffe, was a tall, good-looking man, a little under thirty. Both the ladies greeted him warmly.

"Did it go off well?" Miss Sinclair enquired.

"Tell us all about it," Lady Cecilia said.

"There's not much to tell," he replied slowly. "It's a form, you know—a mere form; and it doesn't take five minutes. You go up to the table—two members introduce you, you know. You take the oath, and then you shake hands with the Speaker, you know; and that's all. You have to show up what they call the Return to the Writ."

Edith's mother entered the room, and Tom Barracliffe enquired after her health, and then Lady Cecilia had something to say and drew her over to the window. Tom and Edith had one end of the long drawing-room to themselves. She was the first to speak.

"Now, Mr. Barracliffe, you are really a member, and I shall be quite impatient till I read your first speech. I was so sorry that there was no contest at the election; I would have liked you to give ever so many addresses to the electors and explain all your principles. What an excitement we should have had over the poll!"

Tom Barracliffe smiled a little.

"I believe most men are glad to get in as easily as they can," he said. "I can't say I was anxious to speechify; people ask you such awkward questions, you know."

"But now you are in the House, you must speak, you know; and you must begin soon. You must get over the first awkwardness as soon as you can."

"You don't want me to join in—in the debate on the Address, do you?" he asked.

"No," Miss Sinclair said; "that might be too soon. You must take a week or two to get used to the House; but you might speak once or twice when the Estimates are being



discussed. Just say a word or two, you know, and reserve your first great speech for some great occasion."

"You want me to make myself ridiculous," Tom said.

"Never mind about seeming ridiculous," she replied. "Remember Disraeli and his failure. How grand it was of him to say, 'The day will come when you will hear me!'"

Mr. Barraccliffe looked very dubious. After a long pause he said, with some attempt at lightness, "You lay your commands upon me, then."

"I do. You are to be ambitious, you are to speak and sit on Committee, and address public meetings; and by and by you will get some office, and then you will go into the Cabinet, and perhaps become Prime Minister."

Tom Barraccliffe looked round, and then said in a low voice—

"You don't intend to keep me waiting till then, I hope?"

"Till you are Prime Minister—no. I shall be an old woman then, I suppose."

Tom did not smile or look at her. He sat with his head bent forward, gazing intently at a spot in the carpet. After a little while Edith spoke again:

"Seriously, Mr. Barraccliffe, I can't tell you any more yet. If it's a sin not to know one's own mind, I am guilty of it. I like you very much, I do indeed; and there is no one I like better or so well. I think you ought to be satisfied with that. And I believe in you too. I believe you can do great things, and I want you to try."

Here a footman appeared with tea and its appurtenances. Lady Cecilia and Mrs. Sinclair came back to the little table where the two young people were sitting. Tom looked up at his sister. "Miss Sinclair decides that I am to be an orator."

"Edith is right," said his sister. "We expect great things of you now—'The applause of listening Senates to command.'"

She recited Gray's verse *ore rotundo*.

Tom Barraccliffe looked slightly bored—he never disguised his contempt for poetry. Miss Sinclair looked at him enthusiastically.

"I shall be dreadfully disappointed if you don't make your presence felt in the House," she said.

"Oh," replied Tom, "I must go into training at once, I suppose. What does one do to become an orator, I wonder?"

"Oh," said Miss Sinclair, "you'll want to read up all the great

questions. If you like, I'll ask Mr. Tracy to give me a list of the best books."

Tom Barraccliffe did not look particularly pleased.

"Oh, Tracy," he said; "of course, he knows all about it!"

"Mr. Tracy knows everything that is worth knowing, or almost everything," said Miss Sinclair. "He is like an encyclopædia, and he always opens at the right place."

Tom didn't reply at once, and the conversation drifted away from the omniscient Mr. Tracy. But as Lady Cecilia was taking leave—a private and particular leave—of her friend, she said—

"I never knew before you thought so much of Mr. Tracy, Edith."

Miss Sinclair blushed a little, but she replied firmly, "Mr. Tracy is the cleverest man I know, and the best."

"Poor Tom has got a rival then," said Lady Cecilia, looking straight at her friend.

"Mr. Tracy will always be my friend, I hope," she replied, "whatever happens."

After a short pause she added, "He has never claimed to be more."

Lady Cecilia was somewhat reassured, but as she and her brother were driving home together, she couldn't refrain from asking him what he thought of Mr. Tracy.

Tom laughed.

"Oh, I'm not afraid of him," he said. "He's nobody---writes for Reviews and Dictionaries, and all that sort of thing."

"I suppose he's clever?" said Lady Cecilia carelessly.

"Oh, yes," Tom replied. "He's clever, no doubt. We were at school together."

A good deal was implied in the last sentence. It meant that it was at school that Tom had learned that very clever people generally exist very much for the benefit of those who can turn their cleverness to account.

"I may as well get a list of books from old Tracy," Tom added.

"Why were you so late in coming, Tom?" asked his sister.

"I looked in at the club on the way up. Peppercorn came in a bad second."

"I don't think you ought to have kept us waiting," Lady Cecilia replied. "You knew how excited Edith was."

Tom only smiled in reply. His smile denoted superiority and

an intimate knowledge of women's ways. He was not going to lose his suit by appearing too eager to win it. Just as the carriage was stopping he said to his sister—

"Don't think that I am going to lose my chance. You may be sure that the late lamented Sinclair didn't spin cotton all those years for nothing; she must be very rich. I've no doubt I should be able to start the best training stable in England. That's the only way to make anything out of racing."

And brother and sister entered the paternal dwelling, the town residence of the Earl of Meadhamstead. Tom was the second son of that well-known nobieman, and his elder brother was married and had children. Tom had a full share of that popularity which frequently consoles younger sons. Almost every one spoke of him as a very good sort of fellow indeed. He danced well and rode well, and both at Monte Carlo and Notting Hill was a great slaughterer of pigeons. He was tall and undeniably good-looking, and Miss Sinclair, as we have seen, thought him remarkably intelligent. He had come to know that young lady by means of his sister, Lady Cecilia, who was very fond of Tom and thought he wanted a little judicious guidance. Tom had been spending too freely for some years, and his father had emphatically refused either to increase his allowance or to pay his debts. Hence Tom had come to regard the holy estate of matrimony with an eye of favour, or at least of resignation. And Miss Edith Sinclair, daughter and heiress of a wealthy cotton-spinner, not long deceased, was certainly one of the great lots in our Babylonian marriage market.

At first his wooing was very successful. Edith seemed to like him, danced with him, and talked with him, and became more friendly than ever with Lady Cecilia. Then he had experienced a check. Talking very seriously to him one day, Edith told him that she didn't admire idleness and idle people, that she thought a man ought to find something better to do in the world than shooting pigeons. There were plenty of occupations—science, art, literature, politics. Why didn't he choose one of these?

Tom was not a little perplexed by this novel doctrine, and consulted his sister.

"Edith means what she says," Lady Cecilia replied. "I know her way of thinking. If you want to please her, you'll have to do something; you'll have no chance if she once thinks you are stupid."

"I know she admires intellect, and all that sort of thing," Tom said ruefully.

"You had better try politics, Tom," his sister had replied; "it's easier than anything else. And papa can get them to find you a safe seat when the General Election comes on."

Thus it was that Tom had become a legislator, and now he was contemplating, with some repugnance, the idea of having to make a speech. But after a few days' attendance at the House, his fear sensibly diminished. It seemed pretty easy to speak as well as most members did. And what they said looked all right when it was reported in the papers.

The Mr. Tracy who has been mentioned was an old friend of Edith's, if a young lady of twenty-three can be said to have any old friends. He came very often to Mrs. Sinclair's house in Park Lane, talked a good deal to Edith, and lent her books with passages marked in them. These Edith did not always read, but she liked discussing them with Mr. Tracy. Edith was very intelligent, and was always forming plans for what she called her mental improvement. The claims and fascinations of society were invariably too strong for these well-meant intentions; but Edith held fast to her friendship with Mr. Tracy, as a proof (to herself) that she was not altogether frivolous.

## CHAPTER II.

About a fortnight after Tom Barraccliffe's final enrolment as a legislator, Miss Sinclair bethought herself that she hadn't seen Mr. Tracy for several days, and was pleased to remember that he was coming in to dinner that evening. While she was dressing she thought a good deal of her old friend, and wondered he had kept away so long. He had, as she told Lady Cecilia, never aspired to be more than a friend, and he had seen with unmoved eye the rise and fall of a good many suitors. He was free from all petty jealousy, and yet Edith was sure that he did not like Mr. Barraccliffe. She remembered a discussion she had had with him, in which she had been led into championing the cause of the society young man.

"The men one knows," she had said, "generally seem rather stupid, because they haven't much to say, and say it badly. But still they are capable of surprising one at times by being so

much better than they look. They are too much afraid of wearing their heart upon their sleeves."

"Miss Sinclair," Mr. Tracy had replied very seriously, "the belief in the inarticulate young Englishman is one of the most hurtful of our social superstitions, one of the most mischievous of our *idola tribus*. I hope you are not going to worship that silly fetish of society novels. Depend upon it, the average young man appears stupid and indifferent because he really is so."

The conversation had lasted for some time, always in general terms, but each had known that the other was thinking of Mr. Barracliffe.

Edith remembered this talk, and was sorry for Mr. Tracy. She had herself a firm belief in Mr. Barracliffe's talent, and in the real goodness of his disposition, and felt sure that proofs would be forthcoming; but in proportion as it was clear to her that Tom had gained a place in her affections which no one else had held, she felt a certain tenderness for the man who had the second place in her mind. They had never thought of being more than friends, she told herself, but now even that friendship was modified.

Edith sat next to Mr. Tracy at dinner, and was very amiable to him. She made him talk, and listened with the most flattering attention. Only when the talk was of politics she wondered if he guessed that she was thinking of Mr. Barracliffe. Mr. Tracy had good reasons for talking on political subjects—the political situation was just then very peculiar. Various rumours had been afloat, and were now gathering consistency and definite shape. These centred round a great politician, whom his opponents called the first of orators, and his followers the first of statesmen. Mr. Vavasour's position in the world of politics was as remarkable as great experience, unrivalled talents, and the most restless energy could make it; and so, when it was authoritatively stated in one of the newspapers that he had decided to accept what was then known as the New Programme, the greatest interest was excited. The report was at once denied. Mr. Vavasour wrote a long letter to the journal which had published it, but his language was so guarded and ambiguous that the advocates of the New Programme were more than ever certain of their illustrious convert. And not many days after, Mr. Vavasour, in distributing the prizes to a Mechanics' Institute in the North of England, had made a speech which had electrified the whole country. The New Programme was to be adopted



under a changed name. Mr. Vavasour had accepted the measures he had denounced. Never since the great conversion of Sir Robert Peel had there been so much political excitement. The great question was, how far Mr. Vavasour would be able to carry his own followers with him. A schism in the party seemed inevitable.

It was on these topics that Mr. Tracy discoursed, while Edith listened, and thought of Mr. Barraccliffe. How would all this affect him? If there was a split, which side would he take?

Mr. Tracy noticed her abstracted air, and divined whither her thoughts were tending.

He said in a tone which he tried to make indifferent, "Your friend Mr. Barraccliffe is one of the new members, isn't he?"

The question was quite unnecessary, and Edith knew it.

"Yes," she said, "he is."

"Now," continued the other, "I wonder what suggested the idea to him! Does he think of becoming a statesman?"

"I am afraid you have a low opinion of Mr. Barraccliffe," said Edith with forced calmness. "You seem to think that he has no capacity whatever."

"Not at all," replied Tracy quickly. "He is an expert horseman, a crack shot, and he used to play cricket very well indeed."

His irony was too apparent. Miss Sinclair's cheeks flushed, and she replied with some warmth:

"Perhaps he is not so stupid as you think. He may surprise you one of these days. At any rate, I believe firmly in his ability and in his future."

And Edith darted an indignant glance at him as she left the room with the other ladies.

Tracy felt very unhappy as he lighted his cigarette. He regretted that he had shown so plainly his dislike of Tom Barraccliffe, and it was but poor consolation to assure himself that his low estimate of that gentleman was the right one.

"What can she see in him?" he kept repeating to himself, as many a hapless gentleman has done in like case.

In the drawing-room his mortification mounted still higher. Tom Barraccliffe had come in, and was talking to Edith. She was interested in his conversation, evidently, for she smiled, and her eyes sparkled. Mr. Tracy could not help watching the two young people, while he tried to talk commonplaces to Mrs. Sinclair.

Tom had come in from the House of Commons to bring Miss Sinclair a piece of news. Lord Yelverton had made a short speech, in which he had declared himself unable to follow Mr. Vavasour's lead any longer. And Lord Yelverton would have a large following.

"And you, Mr. Barraccliffe?" Edith asked excitedly.

Tom looked very grave.

"I shall follow Lord Yelverton," he said. "But I shall not tell anybody so just yet. Only I thought you might like to know it."

Edith nodded solemnly. She felt that she was the possessor of a state secret.

"I am glad you are going to take that side," she said. "Mr. Tracy says——"

She stopped, and cast a hurried glance at the gentleman she had named. Tom appeared not to notice this.

"We shall have lively times in the House," he said. "Yelverton's resignation will be followed by one or two others. Then there will be a Want of Confidence Motion, and a high old debate."

"Ah," cried Edith eagerly, "what a chance for you! You must speak. They will listen all the more because they won't know which side you are going to vote."

Tom laughed a little.

"Would you really like me to speak?" he said.

"Oh, you must, you must!" she replied. "You must show them that you are not going to be a mere dummy, who only votes as he is told."

"And you won't mind it if I make an ass of myself?" asked he. "I dare say I shall."

"I am sure you won't make yourself ridiculous," she said. "I've no doubt you'll succeed very well; of course I shan't expect too much."

"I'll try then," he said. "It's to please you, you know."

She avoided his glance.

"Shall you be very nervous, do you think?"

"I hope not," he replied. "And now, I suppose, I ought to go down to the House again."

"Of course you ought," she said. "Run away." And she gave him a glance which ought to have made him proud and happy.

Mr. Barraccliffe took his leave and proceeded to his club, where

he prepared himself for his legislative duties by winning ten pounds at *carté*.

Mr. Tracy did not stay very late at Mrs. Sinclair's.

"Going so soon, Mr. Tracy?" Edith exclaimed as he said good-bye. "Shall we see you again before long? We are always in at five o'clock on Tuesdays and Fridays, as you know."

"I can hardly forget that, Miss Sinclair," Tracy replied gloomily.

"You have rather avoided us lately, I am afraid," Edith replied, with an attempt at lightness in her tone.

"Yes, Miss Sinclair," he said slowly. "I have kept away a little. When I came I could hardly speak to you. I had to sit by and watch Titania caressing the long ears of Bottom."

Edith felt very angry at these words; but when she looked at the speaker, and saw how unhappy and dejected he looked, her anger gave way, and she said quietly:

"Of course I know what you mean, Mr. Tracy. You are very unjust to—to Mr. Barracliffe."

After a pause she said, still more gently, "I shall be very unhappy if you continue to think so badly of him."

Mr. Tracy uttered something between a sigh and a groan, pressed her hand for one moment, and then left the house. He walked home to his lodgings, and then sat down and meditated sadly. He thought of Edith, of how he had first met her, and of all their confidential conversations, of how proud he was of her intelligence and her beauty, and of how pleasant their friendship had been.

"And now it is all over," he said to himself. "She is going to marry that tall, good-looking, stupid barbarian. She is very much in love with him—I saw her eyes following him round the room. She liked me very much once, but never like that. She likes me still in a way, but our old friendship is dead, and only wants decent Christian burial; or, if it still lives, it won't survive her marriage to that animal. Between a man and a woman a friendship that doesn't lead to a wedding, will be ended by a wedding. After all, she is only going the way of all heiresses."

Thus did Tracy, sad at heart, soliloquise, and then he fell again to thinking of Edith, her fine pencilled eyebrows and her lovely eyes, and how she had looked when she had said this well-remembered word, and that. After much musing, he gave a deep sigh, and took from a shelf a tiny volume which he knew

well. It was the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, and he read in it the familiar doctrine of τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῶν and τὰ μὴ ἐφ' ἡμῶν.

Tom Barracliffe, too, thought a good deal about Edith. He, too, had noticed the eyebrows and the eyes, and knew as well as poor Tracy that Miss Sinclair was remarkably pretty.

This was an additional stroke of good fortune—heiresses so often think it superfluous to be good-looking; and he thought with the greatest pleasure of the suitors Miss Sinclair had had, over all of whom he was going to triumph. Mr. Barracliffe's reading had not been very extensive, and I do not know if he had ever heard of Congreve. But he would have echoed the sentiment of the famous couplet,

"If there is bliss in love, 'tis when I see  
The heart that others bleed for, bleed for me."

And then this thought wandered on to other fields—to the purchase of yearlings and the Blue Ribbon of the Turf, and the still heavier stakes of Sandown and Kempton. Even gentlemen who don't care for poetry are capable of imaginative flights like this.

A few days later Mr. Tracy called at Mrs. Sinclair's and had a few minutes' talk with Edith alone.

"I want to tell you," he said, "that I am sorry I spoke as I did the other night. You said I was unjust to Mr. Barracliffe, and you are very likely right."

He paused, and looked at her for some time, smiling sadly. "We have been very great friends, haven't we?" he said at last.

Edith bowed her head, and her voice shook a little as she replied:

"And we shall continue so, I hope. Why should everything be changed? Because, if——"

"We might be still the best of friends, if it were not for one thing. I love you—love you so passionately that the thought you will soon belong to another is more than I can bear. And so I am prejudiced and unjust, as you say. I am really saying good-bye, Edith, now. I shall not see you again for some time, perhaps not till after you are married. And if in the midst of all your happiness you can find time to think of one as desolate and unhappy as I shall be, think of me as kindly as you can."

"Mr. Tracy," Edith cried, "I am so sorry for all this; I never thought you cared for me in that sort of way."

"Good-bye," he said again. Their hands clasped, and he was gone.

For a moment or two Edith wished that she had told him that she was not absolutely engaged to Mr. Barraccliffe, as he supposed, and then she was glad she had not undeceived him. For, after all, was he wrong? Had she not virtually surrendered? She tried to imagine how she would feel if everything was broken off between her and Mr. Barraccliffe. But she soon took refuge from this dismal prospect by reassuring herself of her belief in him. To the superficial observer he might appear dull and commonplace; she had seen from the first that beneath his external indifference and occasional heaviness there lay hid, talent and character and deep feeling; she was sure of this, and the world at large would be sure of it too, before very long.

In the midst of these reflections poor Tracy was forgotten, and Edith was pleased to have her usual daily visit from Lady Cecilia, who came in full of talk about Tom and the speech which he was going to think seriously about in a few days.

And while the young ladies were employed in this interesting and agreeable manner, Tom had hunted up Mr. Tracy in his suburban lodgings, and was explaining to his old schoolfellow the very private and particular business which had brought him to that unfashionable neighbourhood. Tom felt that his errand was a very disagreeable one, and he was very awkward at first; but the interview was soon over, and he left the house with the comfortable feeling of a man who has got what he wanted and now sees his path straight before him.

### CHAPTER III.

The great debate on the Want of Confidence Motion did not come off till nearly a month later. There had been all the usual preliminary skirmishes of letters, public speeches, meetings, demonstrations. The opponents of the New Programme and its advocates were alike active, and Mr. Vavasour, shaking off the weight of years, had risen to the occasion and produced one of his most magnificent orations. And the excitement deepened as both parties gathered themselves together for their great conflict. And as the time grew nearer, and the issue seemed more and more doubtful, and more and more momentous, the two ladies who were interested in Tom Barraccliffe became excited and nervous, and at last absolutely frightened.



Lady Cecilia begged her brother not to think of entering in such a battle of the giants.

"They will never listen to you, Tom," she said, "when they are waiting to hear the big men. And the papers won't report you at all."

And Edith too began to be quite alarmed at Tom's audacity and her own thoughtlessness.

"Mr. Barraccliffe," she said, "I would very much rather that you didn't speak in this debate. If you don't succeed, I shall feel it is my fault. Wait for a less important occasion, when you won't be so nervous."

But Tom shook his head and smiled, and said he had no nerves.

"I shall be cool enough," he said. "I don't think so much of the House of Commons as you do. They are a very casual lot."

Then the day came when, just as Edith was sitting down to dinner, she got a telegram. "Shall try to-night. T. Barraccliffe." She was so excited that she rushed off before her dinner was properly finished to Lady Cecilia, and the two young ladies endeavoured to help each other through the trying ordeal of waiting for the result.

It was quite late when Mr. Barraccliffe came in.

"I went round to your house, Miss Sinclair," he said. "They told me you were here."

"Well?" exclaimed the two ladies simultaneously, with the most acute interrogative emphasis.

"I've made my speech," Tom said. "At least most of it. I'm not sorry it's over."

They were clamorous for full particulars, but Tom's face wore a stolid appearance, and he vouchsafed only the briefest details.

He had not broken down. He had spoken in a full House, or nearly full. He didn't think his speech was an utter failure. There had been some applause at the end of it. He had received some compliments upon his performance. Compliments didn't, generally speaking, amount to much.

These little scraps of information were all that could be extracted from him, and before long he said he must return to the House.

"You may be sure he has done well," Lady Cecilia said, when her brother had gone. "I know Tom's ways."

"I suppose I must wait till the morning," Edith said. "I've

told them to send up all the papers to my bedroom as soon as ever they come."

Tom's speech duly appeared in the next morning's papers, and for the next two or three days neither of our young ladies could think of anything else. The speech had been a great success—more than a success, a veritable triumph. There had never been a maiden speech like it. It had come like thunder out of a clear sky, and had astonished, bewildered, electrified the House. It was impossible to say how many votes it had lost to Mr. Vavasour. The leader of the Opposition, speaking shortly afterwards, had referred to it in the warmest terms of eulogy, and Mr. Vavasour himself, in the great oration which posterity will remember as one of his highest efforts, had, with that generosity which was one of his most striking traits, gone out of his way to give it the most emphatic praise. The speech was not a very long one—it occupied just two columns in the *Times*. Both Lady Cecilia and Edith read it over till they knew it by heart. It was amusing to see them on the morning after its delivery, going over it together, radiant, beaming, enthusiastic, picking out fine passages, and declaiming them to each other, with what they judged appropriate parliamentary gestures.

"Just listen to this!" Edith cried enthusiastically. "You know your brother always pretends that he hates poetry, and never reads it, but how beautifully he brings in the quotation from Browning. Here is the passage—

"Members opposite may exult in the perversion of the Right Hon. gentleman, we can only grieve over it. For years they have prophesied evil of him, and now that their predictions have been in some measure justified, they triumph; while we hang our heads in shame. We cannot follow our great leader in his treason to the State; we can only lament that it is our bitter lot to oppose him.

"We that had loved him so, followed him, trusted him,  
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,  
Caught his great language, learned his clear accents."

"Isn't that splendid now—'his mild and magnificent eye'—isn't that appropriate?"

Lady Cecilia echoed her friend's enthusiasm, and more passages were picked out and declaimed, and admired, till, as I have said, they both knew the speech by heart.

Then there was the reading of the papers, and picking out

their comments on the great effort of oratory. All mentioned it ; some went very far in their praise. A new orator had arisen, and behind the orator might be discerned the promise of a new statesman. When, after the division, Mr. Vavasour was found to be in a minority, one of the morning papers boldly attributed the result to the successful efforts of a new member.

"One who addresses the House of Commons for the first time can seldom do more than claim an indulgent pity for his oratorical efforts ; the maiden speech to which we are now referring is in the proud position of having controlled a division, rejected a Bill, and overthrown a Ministry."

There was more in the same strain, and Edith read the whole of it with the deepest interest and the most profound belief.

To do him justice, Tom bore all his honours meekly. He never alluded to his speech himself, and when others talked about it, and paid him fresh compliments, he said as little as could be said under the circumstances. Edith had to wait before she could give him her congratulations ; he didn't call in Park Lane till two clear days had passed. When they met, he began to talk on indifferent subjects, but she soon introduced the great topic.

"I hope I have pleased you," Tom said, in reply to her remarks.

"Indeed you have pleased me very, very much," she replied.

"Then," Tom replied, "may I hope that now"—and he looked her full in the face.

Her eyes dropped, she replied slowly :

"Yes, Mr. Barracliffe." After a little, she added. "I liked you from the first, and now I think I love you, Tom. And I love you, because I admire you so, and because I was the first to find out how clever you are."

The two sat together for some minutes longer, and Tom at last went home happy in the thought that he had won the great prize. Edith too was very happy during those next days and weeks. Everybody thought the engagement "such a suitable one," and said all sorts of sweet things about the man she had chosen. The only drawback to her happiness—it was a very slight one—was that Tom refused to follow up his great success as he might have done. The country had to be roused from its confidence in Mr. Vavasour, meetings were to be held in all the large towns, every one who could speak at all was expected to declaim against the new departure, to denounce the New Programme in

its thinly-veiled disguise. And much was expected of Mr. Barraccliffe. No less a personage than Lord Yelverton had told him that he counted on his help. But Tom preferred for the present to rest on the laurels he had already gained. Edith would have preferred it otherwise, but she let herself be easily persuaded that Tom was right.

"If I go on the stump," Tom said, "I shall see very little of you. There will be time for speech-making by and by."

How could Edith resist such an argument?

Lovers in their happiness are apt to be blind to the feelings of others, and Edith certainly on one occasion was rather cruel to Mr. Tracy. After his farewell to her, he came no more to Park Lane; but she met him by accident at the Academy. He was in that room where architectural designs "waste their sweetness on the desert air." After the first greetings, she attacked him with the question—

"Of course you've read Mr. Barraccliffe's speech—what do you think of it?"

There was a cruel triumph in her tone.

Tracy spoke calmly in reply.

"I have read it, Miss Sinclair, and I must say that I do not think very highly of it. It seems to me merely commonplace rhetoric."

"Mr. Tracy," Edith said indignantly, "how you must hate poor Mr. Barraccliffe!"

A look of pain passed across his face. Then he glanced at her and said in a low voice:

"I hear that you are to be married in the autumn, Miss Sinclair."

Edith bowed her head in silence. She was a little sorry now that she had met her old friend.

"I hope you will be very, very happy," he said.

"Good-bye," she replied, holding out her hand.

"Good-bye," he said sadly; and then turning away he proceeded to examine one of the architectural designs which interest the general public so little. Edith rejoined her mamma, and as she a quarter of an hour later passed the entrance of the room she had left, she saw that Mr. Tracy was still standing in the same position, examining the same drawing.

## CHAPTER IV.

Tom Barracliffe's reputation did not at all suffer from his inaction. People shook their heads and said he was a knowing fellow who had learnt his own value and did not mean to make himself cheap. He was quite right to keep in reserve for a great occasion.

In fact the only drawback to Tom's good fortune was that he failed both at the Derby and at Ascot to pick out the winning horse. Goodwood made up some of his losses, but before Goodwood came, a very important event happened to him.

There was in the North of England a retired ironmaster whose name was Whiting. This man's blast-furnaces had made him rich, and the speculations which occupied his leisure had almost doubled his wealth. He had no children, no relations of any kind, and was considered eccentric.

Now Mr. Whiting was an ardent politician, and of course had read Tom's famous speech. He had been delighted with it. The idea that it had brought about the defeat of Mr. Vavasour pleased him still more. He saw in Tom Barracliffe a rising statesman, a saviour and defender of his country. As a tribute of his admiration he determined to leave him the bulk of his property. The lawyer was sent for and the will was made. Mr. Whiting's eccentricity was displayed in nothing so much as in his testamentary views; he made a new will on an average about once a month, and though the minor bequests remained the same in all, the principal legatee was continually changed. Sometimes it was an author, whose book had pleased the eccentric old man, sometimes it was some heroic fireman or brave sailor. Only a year before Tom's name was inscribed in the place of favour, Mr. Vavasour himself, then innocent of the New Programme, had been the destined heir. Thus Tom might never have succeeded to Mr. Whiting's many thousands, had not a fit of apoplexy prevented the fickle testator from choosing a fresh favourite.

Tom thus got the benefit of what was really the last will and testament of John Whiting, Esquire, of Comber Hall, in the county of Durham.

Edith was well pleased when Tom told her the good news, pleased with the secret thought that no one would be able to attribute Tom's marriage to mercenary motives.

She enquired after the amount of the legacy.



"About £170,000," said Tom coolly.

Tom had a good deal to do in connection with this big bequest, and this had necessitated a postponement of the wedding.

"And there is to be an Autumn Session of Parliament, Tom," Edith said one day, when the interesting date was under discussion; "our honeymoon must be a short one, for of course you must be in your seat."

"I don't see the necessity," said Tom curtly. "I don't care about wasting so much of my time in the House of Commons."

Edith looked at him in amazement.

"In fact," he continued slowly, and with emphasis, "I am sick of the Parliamentary business altogether. I have applied for the Chiltern Hundreds."

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During the January of the following year Mr. Tracy for the first time in his life was at Monaco. One afternoon he had been to a concert of classical music, and was about to take a quiet contemplative stroll through the beautiful gardens of the Casino, when he was accosted by a gentleman who was sitting at one of the tables in front of the *café* opposite. Turning round, he saw Tom Barracliffe.

Tracy was not very glad to meet his old acquaintance.

"He is on his wedding tour," he thought, "and perhaps getting a little tired of it. He will invite me to dinner, and I shall have to meet *her*."

Still, he couldn't help himself; he shook hands with Tom, and on his invitation seated himself at the table, and had expressed a preference for vermouth. Then he remarked on the beauty of the weather.

"Do you know," Tom said, "you are about the last person in the world I should have expected to see here? Is it *roulette* or *trente-et-quarante*? Are you playing a system?"

Tracy smiled faintly.

"I am working," he said. "Consulting some documents in the Library up there," and he pointed in the direction of Vieux Monaco.

"Well," Tom replied, "you are the first person I ever heard of who came here to read. There isn't much study done at Monte Carlo, you may be sure. I came here about a week ago to pot at the pigeons, and I've done very well, so far."

"How is Lady Cecilia?" asked Tracy.

"Quite well, I believe," said Tom indifferently. "She is going to be married before long."

"And how is—" Tracy hesitated a little—"your wife?"

Tom burst out laughing.

"I hope she's quite well," he said. "I've no doubt she is. Perhaps she is doing German exercises, or playing scales, or something of that sort. You see," he added in an explanatory tone, "she is certain to be in the school-room, for though I am sure to marry at last, I don't mean to do so for a good time yet. There's no reason why I should."

Tracy listened, bewildered.

"I thought you were married to Miss Sinclair," he said at last, with as much indifference as he could assume.

"Bless you, no," said the other, good-humouredly. "Where have you been living all this time? That was broken off ages ago."

"Broken off?" said Tracy, and felt as he spoke that he was betraying his eagerness for information.

"Yes," replied Tom, with irritating slowness; "the fact is, we didn't suit each other at all. She thought a lot of me, I know, but not in the way I wanted. And I found being a member of Parliament no end of a nuisance. I had to sit on Committees, and they were always wanting me to take part in the debates—it was all owing to that confounded speech that you wrote out for me, and that it took me three days to learn."

"Come," said Tracy, "it wasn't all mine."

"All but a few sentences," rejoined Tom, "which I put in, just to feel that I had some interest in it. And I've no doubt they would have been better away. I don't say anything against the speech. I dare say it was very eloquent, and all that; but I didn't fancy being made to live up to it, as they say. And then, you know, it's not so very jolly getting credit that doesn't belong to you."

Tracy said nothing, but sat looking at his glass.

"I'm awfully obliged to you, all the same," resumed Tom, "because, you see, if it hadn't been for the famous speech, old Whiting wouldn't have left me all his shekels. If you were one of those commercial fellows, you'd want a commission, or something of that sort."

Tracy laughed, and shook his head.

"I heard of your good fortune," he said. "I congratulate you. I don't think I'll make any claim for my share of the transaction."

"Well," the other replied, "I'll give you a piece of news

instead. Mrs. Sinclair and her daughter are both on the Riviera."

"Do you know where?" cried Tracy excitedly.

"Ah," said Tom, "I thought the news would interest you. Their address is Villa Rousseau, Mentone. Their villa is on the East Bay, not far from the Italian frontier. I would recommend you to call on them."

Tracy promised to follow this advice, and then inwardly revolving many things, he walked slowly down the hill to his lodgings in the Condamine.

Tom Barracliffe watched him disappear round the corner of the Casino, and smiled.

"It's curious," he reflected, "to see how eager some men are for matrimony, and how glad others are to keep out of it. Poor Tracy! I wonder if there is any woman alive that would ever make me like that. At any rate, I hope it won't be for some time yet."

Mr. Tracy was at Mentone early the next day. He didn't intend to call (so he assured himself) at the Villa Rousseau till about half-past four, but he was anxious to see the town—there were one or two interesting graves in the cemetery.

But it so happened that he had not been half an hour in the place before he met Mrs. Sinclair driving a small pony-chaise. She stopped to speak to him—he explained that he proposed to call.

"You had better come up to *déjeuner* at twelve," she said "I'm sure Edith will be glad to see you after all this time."

Tracy, of course, didn't fail to be at the Villa Rousseau at the appointed time, and at five minutes past twelve he was sitting down at the table with the two ladies. The repast was delightful. In the midst of his pleasure at seeing Edith again, he couldn't help contrasting the dainty, prettily served *déjeuner* with the two-and-a-half-francs' *table d'hôte* he generally partook of, at one of the cheaper hotels of Monte Carlo. After it was over, Edith proposed a walk in the garden, and they strolled about for some time, chatting lightly on all sorts of topics.

At last Edith pointed to a little arbour whose roof was formed by trellised vines.

"Let us sit down here a little," she said; "walking in the sun has made me a little tired, I think."

Then, as soon as they were both seated, she turned on him with the direct question—

"Why did you write that speech for Mr. Barracliffe?"

"Did he tell you that I wrote it?" Tracy asked, evading her question.

"He did at last; but I had begun to suspect it. Mr. Barracliffe got to be very disgusted when any one alluded to his one speech. Nothing could make him venture another. Why did you do it?"

"Well," replied Tracy slowly, not caring to encounter her glance, "partly because he asked me, and I couldn't refuse him. I used to write his verses for him when we were at school together. And then, you know, you were engaged to him——"

"I wasn't," interrupted Edith quickly.

"You were not?" he replied. "I thought so—I was sure of it. And you loved him—at least, so I thought—and you wanted so much to believe in him. Of course, I never thought the speech would make as much stir as it did, but I did believe it would do pretty well; and I thought how that would please you. And then, you know, you had told me that I was unjust to him, and——"

"Don't say anything more," she said, "I understand. But you were very wrong all the same. Think how I was deceived, and how everybody was deceived, and what might have happened."

Tracy did not reply, and the silence lasted for some time, and was felt to be very oppressive by both.

Then Edith rose and said she must go back to the house, and see what her mother was going to do that afternoon.

"Ah, Miss Sinclair," Tracy cried at last, "wait one moment longer. Listen to me for a few seconds only."

Not a few seconds, however, but fully a quarter of an hour elapsed before they quitted the arbour and went in search of Mrs. Sinclair. That lady was sitting out in the verandah, looking up and down the garden for the missing two.

"Mamma," cried Edith, "here we are. *Wie Verlobte sich empfehlen*, as they say in the German papers. Give us your blessing, mamma."

And her hand slipped into Tracy's, which hung loose by his side.

"Mrs. Sinclair," he said, "my happiness only requires your sanction to make it complete."

She stood looking at them doubtfully, glancing from the one to the other.

"Well, Edith," she said at last, "I've always let you have your own way, and I suppose I shall have to now. Mr. Tracy is very clever, I am sure, and I've no doubt he's very fond of you; so perhaps you might do worse. Of course, you might have done better with all your advantages; but I dare say you don't think so."

Mr. Tracy thanked the lady for even this modified approval, and then he and Edith turned back into the garden and continued to pace its pleasant paths, sometimes talking fast, sometimes with "brilliant flashes of silence."

One of these was ended by Edith's suddenly saying, "Eustace, there is one thing I was right in all the time and you were wrong—I mean the speech. Why did you say it was commonplace? I thought it splendid, and my opinion hasn't changed at all. Do you know I can recite the whole of it?"

"Do," said Tracy; "then perhaps I shall begin to like it."

"Eustace," she said solemnly, "you know what I wanted Mr. Barraccliffe to do. Poor man! He couldn't have done anything if he had tried his hardest. But you can. You ought to enter Parliament and make some more great speeches, and do a lot of good, and become famous."

Tracy laughed.

"If you think so much of me," he said, "I shall have to think more of myself. And perhaps by and by I might be bold enough and vain enough to solicit the votes of the free and independent electors of somewhere or other. But there's something else which ought to happen first."

Edith said nothing, though the blush on her cheek showed that she understood him.

"My dear," he went on, more seriously, "I mustn't let you have too high an opinion of me. I may turn out a very dull dog, you know, and I may never be able to repeat the success which I contrived for Mr. Barraccliffe. How will you feel if I prove a complete failure in politics?"

Edith lifted her head and looked right into his eyes.

"I shall not mind very much after all," she said softly. "I shall admire you just the same—perhaps all the more."

R. SHINDLER.



## EISENACH AND THE WARTBURG.

“AND the breath of thy mouth is that sharp, invigorating wind which steels the nerves and aspirations of the sons and daughters of Thuringia ; makes their hearts susceptible of love, and tenacious of their poetical traditions ; which maintains their feeling for the right, their naïve, true nature, and—their heavenly roughness !”

In these words, the lamented German novelist, Marlitt—herself a Thuringian born—bears testimony to the invigorating influence of her native air upon the character and idiosyncrasy of its children. We also, strangers and pilgrims in the land as we are, feel inclined to add our little pæan of praise of their balsamic, tonic qualities, when, after a prolonged spell of the atmosphere of cities, we draw a new breath, physical and mental, upon some bit of moorland of the wild rolling country in the midst of which lies the little red-roofed town of Eisenach. Around us, as far as the eye can see, stretches the vast, undulating Thuringian Forest, “like the green ribbon of an order upon the breast of Germany,” and before us, rising out of a richly-wooded height just above the town, is that jewel enshrined in every German heart, Thuringia’s Fortress-Queen, the Wartburg of history and song.

Between the thick masses of foliage, still in all the exquisite variety of their first summer tints, are bold projections of conglomerate rocks, down whose rugged sides trickle the streams which go to feed the Elbe, the Weser, and the Rhine, and to water the valleys, whose red soil contrasts with the green of the meadows, in which the mowers are already at work. Green, at least, they look to us from our moor, but we know that with the waving grasses, flowers of every hue—brilliant poppies, gold-hearted marguerites, rich red clover, St. John’s wort, great campanulas, the blue scabious, the delicate eye-bright—are falling under the hands of these Tarquins of the scythe. The scent of

their dying breath is borne upward to us, and mingles with the warm, aromatic, fruity odour of the firs, as we leave the breezy moorland, with its carpet of wild thyme and pale purple heather, and turn into one of the many sheltered paths which lead into the heart of the woods. Here, after plucking some of the almost crimson blossoms of the wild-briar rose, or a bunch of the little white sweet-scented orchis growing among the grass at our feet, we can luxuriate in idleness, listening to the myriad voices of the silence : to the sougling of the wind among the birches and firs, which rise out of their beds of pine-needles, or of "the leaves of yester year," as thick as those in Valombrosa, on all sides of us ; to the creaking and swaying of the more slender stems, the song of yellow-hammers and finches, the chirping of grasshoppers, the hum of the other winged insects. Perhaps, if we are very still, a gentle roe comes cautiously from the underwood, and crosses the path just above us, or a bright-eyed red squirrel looks down at us from his aerial perch among the branches ; or a "pale-throated snake"—for even this Eden has them—glides quietly up to us, and less quietly, but rather more quickly, rustles off again. Sometimes the scene is diversified by human interest, as when a sturdy peasant, with his long primitive cart, laden with freshly felled trees, and his friendly "Guten Tag," comes by ; or a tourist, botanical-box and field-glass on back, spectacles on nose, and hat anywhere but on his head, beams at us with Teutonic urbanity, and "Heiterkeit," and pursues his cheerful way. To these follows, perhaps a little later, a procession of weary-looking women, bent nearly double under huge bundles of firewood, a sad smile crossing their thin, patient faces in laconic assent to our suggestion that the burden is a heavy one—the revolt against its weight being all on our side, none on theirs. They do indeed toil terribly, these Thuringian women—their lives for the most part seem little better than those of beasts of burden ; and it is pathetic to see how spiritless and worn quite young women look, and how soon they lose even the smallest pretensions to youth and comeliness. The district about Eisenach is an especially poor one, there being but little to be got out of forest and fell to supply even the very moderate wants of a German peasant population ; and thin coffee, potatoes, and black bread, which are their staple articles of diet, can hardly be called food of the most nourishing description. It might have struck us as singular that the women should look, as they do, so much more emaciated and poverty-stricken than

their lords and masters, had we not observed that in districts in which the people suffer from insufficiency of food, the rough edge of the scarcity often presses its hardest upon the weaker portion of the community, a fact in social economy not without interest to the student of human nature.

This Thuringia must have been always a Spartan sort of mother to her children, if one may judge from tradition and saga. Storms and tempests, floods which washed away whole villages and destroyed countless human lives, oppression from knights and nobles, endless wars, famine, the Black Death, and more than once "a terrible comet," seem to have plagued the land in desolating succession. But the spirit of the Thuringian folk generally sustained them; notably when, upon the Pope sending ministers of the Inquisition to root out the growing heresy from among them, they took the law into their own hands, and falling upon the Papal minions, made an end of them and of the Inquisition, so far as they and their country were concerned, at the same time, in which summary proceeding we perceive a touch of the "heavenly roughness," and impatience of spiritual despotism which were in later times to make of Thuringia the cradle of the Protestant Reformation.

Before that period, however, was the one in which she earned her title to be called the cradle of the German people's song, to touch upon which we must go back to Eisenach and the Wartburg.

The history of the two is so interwoven that it is difficult to think of them separately, but, as a matter of fact, the town is of much earlier origin than the fortress, and dates from remote heathen times, receiving its ancient name of Isennaha from a stalwart smith (Eisenschmied), who pursued his calling on the banks of the never-frozen Nesse; or from the tool (Eisenhammer) which he wielded. So at least says tradition, according to which also Etzel or Attila, "the Scourge of God," lived for some years in the neighbourhood, ruling the fair-haired, blue-eyed "Germanen" with the same iron grasp which already held all the territory lying between the gates of Byzantium and the "amber islands of the Midnight Sea."

After his time fresh hordes of Huns fell upon Thuringia, and though the people, helped by the Franks, made a brave stand against them, their united efforts were powerless to prevent the entire destruction in 1602 of the little town of Eisenach by these barbarians, to be rebuilt later by a Frankish prince, Ludwig,

surnamed the Bearded, for which he was rewarded by the Kaiser with the title of Count of Thuringia.

It was his son Ludwig the Salier, or, as the people called him, the Springer, who conceived the idea of building a strong fortress upon one of the hills commanding the town. "Wart Berg, du sollst mir eine Burg sein," he said; hence the Wartburg. As usual, a famine distressed the land at the time, and the half-starved peasants were glad to be employed in felling trees and bringing stone from Gotha for the work, in return for grain from the well-filled store-houses of the rich count. All was going on smoothly, when an interpellation occurred, in the form of a not entirely unreasonable protest from the Lord of Frankenstein, to whom the hill belonged. But the wily Springer was equal to the occasion. Causing several hundred basket-loads of earth to be carried up secretly during the night to the scene of operations, he was ready, when Frankenstein made his official protest, with the assertion, accentuated by himself and twelve of his knights thrusting their swords into the newly-transplanted earth, that the new building was entirely on his own ground and foundation. This plea, or the stronger one of might, carried the day, and the work proceeded so rapidly that in three years the first Wartburg was finished.

Ludwig's son, also Ludwig—for princes of that name were as numerous in Thuringia as in France—was the first landgrave, and it was under their successor, Hermann I., that the celebrated Singer-Contest was held on the Wartburg, the hospitality of which this art and splendour-loving ruler threw open to the Minnesingers of his time, making of Eisenach the home of the early German Romantic, the Weimar of the Middle Ages.

Let us imagine ourselves crossing what was once the drawbridge of the fortress, now a strong structure of stone, and passing under the great arched doorways into the court of the Vorburg, our way lying between the beautiful Elisabethengang and Ritterhaus, their 15th-century wattled and plastered upper-stories resting upon the stone foundation-walls, five feet in thickness, which date from the building itself. After which we enter—the old Powder-Tower to our right—the Landgrave's or Prince's House, in which for 350 years the landgraves of Thuringia held court and sway, and which, as an example of a restored princely dwelling of the 12th century, has no rival in Europe. As if by magic we are transported into the "Sturm und Drang" of that wonderful period of the world's history, that earlier Renaissance, in which the

breath of a new spring-time seemed to have flowed into the veins of men, urging them to chivalrous deeds and artistic creations; when Religion herself, long confined in dead forms, awoke to a vitality and power which sent her votaries to die for the Cross in far Eastern land, or inspired them to those magnificent architectural masterpieces in which it seemed as if the very soul of the Middle Ages was incarnated, when into the mere circumstances and surroundings of everyday existence came a warmth and colour, a refinement and luxury even, hitherto undreamed of, the Golden Age of Knighthood and song, when every knight was a singer and almost every singer a knight. The Minnesang, as the German poetry of the time was called, was, as the name implies, dedicated to the service of love; by which, however, we are to understand something beyond and above the common acceptation of the term, the word "Minne," strictly speaking, meaning "Gedanken," loving *thought* of any one. In this, their spiritualised conception of love, the songs of the Minne-poets are to be distinguished from the bold, passionate, glowing lays of Provence and the South of France, and though the Troubadours undoubtedly influenced the German contemporary poetry in form and certain characteristics, they never, except in a few isolated instances, affected this, the essence or soul of it. With the Minnesinger the woman was an ideal incarnation of purity and gentleness, towards whom the man the Herr, or lord—the lady as Herrin came in later from the Troubadours—cherished a chivalrous tenderness; and so essential a part of his creed was the idea of the reverence due to the reserve of womanhood, that it was *hors de règle* to mention the name of the beloved in the verses dedicated to her praise, Walther von der Vogelweide himself only once alluding to his Lady Hildegande by name in the whole course of the life during which he celebrated her in song.

Although love was the principal theme of the Minnesingers, it was not the only one: they had intense sympathy with Nature in all her moods and changes, and sang of spring with its budding trees and flowers, and of the singing birds and long bright days of summer, in contrast with the withered leaves and dying flowers of autumn, and the earth, locked in winter's snow and ice; all with a youthfulness of feeling and simplicity, even *naïveté* of expression, characteristic of the singers themselves, with also a corresponding irregularity and want of finish of rhyme and metrical form. By degrees, however, especially in the second



period of Minnesang, which dates from the Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa, about 1189, the intellectual life in knightly circles in Germany received an impulse and elevation, which naturally reflected itself upon her poetry, which gained an independence and fulness of thought, and an art and dexterity of lyrical expression before unknown to it. Melody it never lacked, and it was the melodious ring of these lays, which rendered them so suitable to be sung, as they were originally intended, accompanied by zither and fiddle, to the "*Reigentänze*" (round-dances) in summer in the open-air, and in the warm shelter of the house in winter.

The period of Minnesang, beginning with the Austrian, Kuremberger,—by many believed to have composed, or at least adapted from the still more ancient Edda, the *Nibelungen Lied*,—reached its zenith with Walther von der Vogelweide and his distinguished contemporaries; after which time a slow and gradual decadence is to be observed. This Walther, the greatest of all the Minnesingers, was born at Botzen in the Tyrol, and, like his brothers in art, began early his wanderings from court to court, and from castle to castle, always with his faithful "*fiedel*" as a companion. He also sang numberless lyrics in praise of love and his lady; but by the side of these rang out bolder lays of indignation against the overbearing power of the Papacy, and of scorn for the avaricious priests and intriguers, whom he looked upon as the natural enemies of his Kaiser and country; for he was a true patriot, devoted to the Hohenstaufen, and when he saw cause for blame, gave it unsparingly and fearlessly, as his many attacks upon what he recognized as the decline in morality of his time also testify. According to the old chronicle, he left directions in his will that corn should be strewed in perpetuity upon his grave, for the birds, his friends, whom he was said to have charmed with his song, and after whom he was called the *Vogelweide*; but this legacy was perverted by the priests into the form of rolls, and appropriated to their own use, they thereby justifying him in his grave for some of the hard things he had said of them in his lifetime! He was one of the six singers who met at the great Wartburg contest, to compete in praise of Hermann and of his son-in-law Leopold of Austria, then also a guest there. How the struggle ultimately became one for life and death, and how Heinrich von Ofterdingen (the *Tannhäuser* of romance) being vanquished by Wolfram von Eschenbach, the noble-minded author of "*Parsifal*," threw himself at the feet of Sophie of

Austria, Hermann's spouse, beseeching her to allow the decision to be referred to the great Hungarian poet and magician Klingsor, is all depicted in fresco by Moritz Schwind upon the wall of the room in which it took place.

From the beautiful mullioned window of this same Snger-Saal, with its arched dais at the end, upon which the singers sat, is a good view of the Hrselberg or Venusberg, as the Minnesingers called it; in which, according to the legend, the noble Knight Tannhuser was held in durance vile by the goddess, the old Germanic Holda, who, banished from the Walhalla on the triumph of Christianity, found refuge here, and developed into the Venus of a later period. All those who know Wagner's beautiful opera are aware how wonderfully the poet-musician (with his prerogative of licence freely exercised) has described the Knight's enthalment by the enchantress; his return after a time, weary of her spells, to the world of men; his repentance, and the refusal of the Pope to accept the same, scornfully making his pardon conditional upon the bursting into leaf of the pilgrim's staff which he carried. But, as the old song says, *à-propos* of this incident:

"Ne'er by any priest alive  
Be man condemned unshriven;  
Let him repent, and better strive,  
His sins be him forgiven;"

and, as Wagner has so exquisitely painted in his music, the dry staff budded and the sinner was saved; the motive of the intercession of the Thuringian Princess Elizabeth being an evolution of the genius of the musician himself, and without legendary foundation.

As in duty bound, we made a pilgrimage to the Venus- or Hrselberg; but our sense of the romantic received a slight shock when we found that this whilom mysterious haunt of Frau Venus, or Frau Hlle, as the country-folk called her, was only an ordinary bare, breezy hill; that the little tower on the summit was no mediæval ruin, but a brand-new restaurant; and, worst bathos of all! the dreaded hole which the superstitious for centuries believed to be the entrance to purgatory, a mere cleft in the rock, utilised at that particular moment for the cooling of sundry bottles of German beer! Then at least we realised, if never before, that great Pan was indeed dead, and that even a Richard Wagner could only galvanise him into a semblance of vitality.

On the same day on which the Singer-Contest was held, was born the patron saint of Thuringia, the holy Elizabeth of Hungary; and it was at the suggestion of the Klingsor of whom we have made mention, that the little four years' old maiden was brought from "far Hungarian land" to be the bride of Hermann's son Ludwig, seven years her senior. She came, "a gift of the morning," with the moderate dowry of 1000 silver marks, but with many rich treasures, among them her cradle and bath of silver, herself the greatest treasure of them all, to be the idol of her adopted country. The universal adoration lavished upon her excited the jealousy of her affianced husband's mother and sisters, who would gladly have had her sent back again, and who, with a view to attaining that end, tried to sow disunion between herself and Ludwig, to whom her love was as a talisman, keeping him from all evil. It was the habit of the royal lover, whenever he had been absent from the Wartburg, to bring with him a present for his girl-bride; but on one occasion he forgot the customary observance, and the envious feminine relatives told Elizabeth that the reason was that he had ceased to care for her. This made her very sorrowful, and she confided her trouble to Vargula, the Prince's cup-bearer, who told his master, as Elizabeth had probably hoped he would. Upon which the young landgrave went at once to his doubting betrothed, and pointing to the distant Inselberg, towering above the surrounding forest: "If that mountain were solid gold, it would not tempt me to believe that my Elizabeth was untrue," he said reproachfully, at which tender reproof her doubts took flight at once and for all. Their marriage took place in 1221, and the attendant festivities in the Wartburg plunged the royal exchequer into difficulties, which Elizabeth's 1000 marks did not go far to relieve. But what was money compared with the countless blessings which this angel of goodness brought down into the land of her adoption? She herself had discarded all her jewels and costly raiment from the day when, returning from visiting her mother-in-law in Eisenach, attired, to do her husband honour, in crown and embroidered robe, she had taken off her jewelled diadem before the image of the Crucified in St. Mary's Church, saying: "Shall not I, a poor girl, be ashamed to wear costly adornment, when Thou art crowned with thorns?" But in her simple attire she was all the more welcome in the houses of her poorer subjects, to whom she was ever a faithful and helpful friend. We are still shown

St. Elizabeth's Well, below the Wartburg, to which the old and feeble, who could not climb the hill, were carried, to be cheered by her with words of sympathy, or relieved with practical help.

When envious evil-wishers accused her to her husband of extravagance, Ludwig's answer was: "Let my Elizabeth do what she will; so long as Eisenach and the Wartburg remain to me, I have enough." At last, however, when her unbounded charity had begun seriously to cripple his finances, he was obliged to modify the *carte-blanche* he had granted her; and the legend is well known, describing her carrying a basket of bread for some hungry ones in the Marienthal—the spot is called Armenruhe, or Rest of the Poor, to this day—and being met by her husband, who with unusual abruptness, asked, "What hast thou under thy cloak?" Tremblingly, she answered, "I am taking roses into the town." And the pious deception was justified by a miracle, for as Ludwig lifted her cloak, instead of loaves a mass of the sweet flowers was disclosed to his enchanted gaze; whereupon he, thinking he discerned a golden crucifix upon the head of his wife, clasped her rapturously in his arms. The wedded happiness of this ideal pair was not of long duration: in seven years from their marriage Ludwig obeyed the summons which was then calling all pious princes to the Holy Land, and soon fell a victim to one of the fevers which in the Crusades counted a greater number of victims than the sword of the infidel itself.

The conclusion is a sad one. Hunted from the Wartburg by her brother-in-law, who usurped the landgravate to the exclusion of her little sons, Elizabeth passed through much suffering and privation, taking refuge finally in a little cell at Marpurg, where she earned a scanty livelihood by spinning, and died, prematurely worn out by hardship and austerities, at the early age of twenty-four; to be canonised with great ceremony a year after her decease.

It is a long step from her time to that in which a boy of fifteen years of age, Martin Luther by name, might have been seen daily wending his way to the school in Eisenach, in which under the learned rector Johannes Trebonnius, he built up the groundwork of the strong enlightened intellect which was suddenly to flash upon an awakened Europe, kindling a steady flame for generations to come. Not one of the least picturesque bits of the town is the old wattled house, very much out of the perpendicular, with its bulging walls and overhanging quaintly-buttressed upper story, from one of the windows of which, rather

less than four hundred years ago, Frau Ursula Cotta saw this same Martin Luther stand, wallet on back, in the course of his daily wandering quest of the cast-off food grudgingly bestowed upon him by the more well-to-do burghers; and, attracted by the beauty of his singing voice, and by something more than commonly interesting in himself, adopted him into her home, and smoothed the early steps of life for him.

Of still greater interest is the Luther Room in the Wartburg, at the back of the Ritterhaus, upon which, after going through the Armoury with its tattered banners of the Thirty Years' War, and weapons and suits of mail of many a dead and gone Thuringian prince, we come, as upon a quiet *andante* after a restless turbulent *presto*. After his bold declaration at Worms had placed his life in jeopardy, the Reformer was brought by order of his staunch friend and protector Frederick the Wise, a nominal prisoner, to this little room, "his Patmos," as he calls it, "his hermitage, his windy manor, on the hill above Eisenach, among the birds who sweetly praise God day and night." Portraits of himself, his parents, and princely patron, hang from the mouldering plaster upon the worm-eaten, time-bleached panels, with specimens of his handwriting and the cuirass he wore as Junker Görg, and from the little round windows he must often have looked out upon the Thuringian forest, with the birds longing for liberty, which found expression in one of his letters, in which he said he "would rather be burned upon glowing coals, than half-alive and half-dead in idle loneliness there." Probably the letter was written in a mood of unusual depression, principally owing to the enforced absence of the bodily exercise, so necessary to a man of his physique (and which he afterwards obviated by regular riding and hunting even, always of course disguised), for we find him writing later, "I am laden with work," and going on to describe how he preached twice daily, and the varied labours, intellectual and spiritual, with which his life was in reality richly filled. His exposition of the 8th, 119th, and 36th Psalms could have been no trivial task; to which he added at the request of Duke John of Weimar an interpretation of the Gospel recital of the ten lepers, which he himself looked upon as his greatest literary achievement, finishing with that which posterity regards as his greatest, the translation of the New Testament Scriptures.

Although perforce absent in the flesh from the scene of the mighty struggle going on between the powers of mental slavery and the inquiring freedom-seeking spirit of the Renaissance, he



was ever in spirit in the thick of the fray, making his presence keenly felt with the fiery reminders of his written speech. Not sparing his friends either on occasion, as when upon the condemnation of his teaching by the University of Paris, the meek Melancthon ("that mild master Philip who took all things so gently") wrote in Latin, what to the fearless outspokenness of Luther seemed a rather tame apology, the latter translated the same into his mother-tongue with this characteristic preface: "Although my dear Philip has given a masterly answer," he said; "yet methinks he has touched them—the Paris theologians—too gently, with too light a plane; but I will come out and bring my axe to bear upon the rude blocks and have forest-law of them."

Schiller says that to live again in art, a thing must first die, and it would seem as though this, which to the impetuous spirit of the fiery Reformer was a virtual death, for the time at least, in the Wartburg, was rather a period of crystallization, from which he was to emerge intellectually and spiritually enriched and concentrated, a very rock for the strivers for liberty of his time to rest upon, against which the opposing powers vainly bent. At last, at the end of eighteen months he refused to be kept any longer from the field of action, and among the many portraits of him by Lucas Cranach is the one depicting him, as, disguised in long beard and worldly attire, he rode by way of Jena to Wittemberg, to rejoice the hearts of his friends by his presence, and as he told his friend Frederick in his blunt fashion, under far higher protection than that of the Elector."

As we look at the old red-roofed, towerless church of St. George in the Eisenach Market-place, with its tiers of galleries, and quaint paintings of the Augsburg Confession, and of the first Protestant celebration of the Eucharist, we wonder whether in the peregrinations allowed to him during the latter part of his friendly imprisonment Luther often bent his steps in its direction, and whether the odd little gilded statue of the hero-saint, his foot upon the dragon's neck, over the fountain hard by, suggested an analogy with his own sharp combat, and cheered him as to its outcome. The space between it, and the little so-called Schloss, with its solitary sentinel, and the Rathhaus at right angles, is on market-days filled with a lively crowd of buyers and sellers from the country round. Goods of all kinds, perishable and otherwise, are here displayed; stalls with bright-coloured handkerchiefs and stuffs, gaudy bead-

necklaces, combs, braces, and what not, in delightful confusion ; with hay, sold by the bundle ; vegetables, butter, eggs, and the unappetising-looking little brownish-yellow cheeses, so much appreciated by the educated—or uneducated—taste. But the pleasantest, coolest "bit" is that just under the church and round the fountain, the "Unter den Linden" of Eisenach, especially charming now in these July days, when the limes are in blossom, and exhaling their (one of the sweetest of all) sweet odours. Here the Thuringian peasant women sit, in their turban-like head-gear, the one relic of their former picturesque costume ; and here is the best fruit to be had, notably the little wood-strawberries, whose exquisite flavour is thought by some epicures to far surpass that of their garden relatives. Cherries, white, crimson, and black, are everywhere in evidence, enough to supply a thirsty army corps, and after observing the Thuringian penchant for, and consumption of them, we can no longer wonder that the only remark which Schubert was able to evolve in his exceeding nervousness upon being admitted to the presence of the great Goethe—was *à-propos* of the number of cherry-trees on the road to Weimar !

Behind the church is a space devoted to the display of native pottery of various hues, glazed and unglazed, sometimes quaint, but seldom artistic ; and near it a row of old-fashioned covered carts, emporiums for potatoes and the loaves of shining black bread. Here the housekeepers skirt about, filling up the lower strata of the pyramid-shaped baskets made of willow withies, which they carry strapped on their shoulders, and which ultimately contain a *mélange* of articles, which only the skill born of long practice could bring into any kind of harmonious arrangement. To whom come those "matres conscripti" of Eisenach, whose purchases have been made betimes, for a little cheerful gossip, wrapped in the wide-frilled, bright-cotton mantles, which we have seen nowhere out of Thuringia, with a kind of sling in front, for the more easy carrying of their offspring ; and one of which, when worn by a young and comely woman, with her fair, plait-crowned head bending Madonna-wise over her infant, has a rather picturesque effect.

Looking down at the scene under a solitary, wide-branched linden by the eastern side of the church, is the bronze statue of the greatest of all the tone-poets, Sebastian Bach, here in Eisenach born, and whose little unpretending house is to be seen, not far from Frau Cotta's, in a steep, "murderously-fanged"

street yclept the Frauenplan. A few weeks ago some of his successors, young musicians of the future (principally pupils of Liszt), celebrated in Eisenach her decanal musical festival. These have all taken their departure, and now our only music of the present is that made by the frogs at night; a kind of harmony which has been described by a modern French writer as "a melodious song; of one note, it is true, but that so exquisitely mournfully harmonious, like detached tones of the principal string of the violin." Be that as it may (and we can imagine there might be dissentient voices!) it is of the musicians of the past of whom we think when we look up at the Wartburg of nights in its moon-illuminated Middle-Age and Renaissance beauty; of Walther von der Vogelweide, of St. Elizabeth, of Luther; of all those who in their widely different ways, and according to their lights and capacities, tried to bring something of harmony into "the contrarious moods of men," with a presentiment more or less defined, that—

"Haply for us the ideal dawn shall break  
And set our pulse in tune with moods divine."

To the last-named especially appropriate seem the words spoken of that poet of our own whose creed was embodied in the lines just quoted, by one who mourned him.

"Such ending is not death; such living shows  
What wide illumination brightness sheds  
From one big heart to conquer men's old foes;  
The coward and the tyrant, and the force  
Of all those weedy monsters' raising heads,  
When song is murk from springs of turbid source."

FLORENCE ELVE NORRIS.



## THACKERAY'S PORTRAITS OF HIMSELF.

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"He was a cynic! You might read it writ  
In that broad brow, crowned with its silver hair,  
In those blue eyes, with child-like candour lit,  
In that sweet smile his lips were wont to wear."

TOM TAYLOR.

NEARLY thirty years ago the *Times* rendered itself remarkable by being the only daily paper to refrain from making special critical allusion to the genius of a man just dead, who was the greatest artist in his own line the world has ever seen, and probably ever will see. Yes, Thackeray lay silent for ever in his house on Palace Green, and Printing House Square afforded him an obituary notice which, by its length, would hardly have gratified the relatives of a defunct City Alderman. "God," said Charlotte Brontë, "made him second to no man," and the world knows now how just was her estimate.

To those of us who hold his memory green, and I own myself in this respect second to none, perhaps no purely selfish disappointment was ever keener than that with which we learnt that no exhaustive biography of this greatest of all novelists would ever be written. The reasons for this are well known, and as honourable to the man himself as to those nearest and dearest who have survived him. But, pungent and heartfelt though our regret must ever be that we, who never knew him or even saw him in the flesh, cannot live, weep, laugh, sympathize and fight his battles o'er again in an authentic biography, and so gain grace and strength to struggle on bravely and devotedly as he did, yet we must ever remember what great things we have received from him, and loyally acquiesce in his expressed desire.

Happily there is no limit placed upon our use of that part of him which he chose to give to the world. Whatever the circumstances of his life may have been with which the world is not

to be made familiar, whatever the joys, the triumphs, the bitter-nesses, the despairs which he encountered (and he was as human as any of us) which are never destined to be disclosed, yet, maugre these, what a priceless legacy of human sympathy and appreciation he has made us heirs to! Do you suppose it cost him nothing to tell us what he has of himself under the thin guise of his favourite heroes? Do you suppose that he has only given us of his head, and that his heart's blood is not circulating and palpitating beneath those immortal pages which stir us with their hidden meaning? I tell you no one need regret that he knows not the man Thackeray. He is there for the finding in 'Vanity Fair,' in 'Esmond,' 'Pendennis,' 'Philip,' and perhaps even more in the 'Roundabout Papers,' if you only take the trouble to look for him. You may know him as well as, nay better than, your most inimical friends or your most friendly enemies, and, in his portrayals, be sure he has never spared himself, though with others he has dealt how gently, how tenderly!

Nor is it only in his writings that we find this laying bare of himself, consciously of his foibles, his weaknesses, his cynicism, unconsciously of his manliness, his reverence, his sympathy. As all who know him are aware, before taking to literature it was his intention to become an artist, and he studied in Paris with that object. Mighty little, however, of the art did he learn there. Indeed I suppose no one ever made half such good pictures with less technical skill than he did. That his books, illustrated by his own hand, are among the most satisfactory wedding of pen and pencil in the language is a remarkable fact of which I have written elsewhere. As Trollope has most appropriately remarked, "How often have I wished that characters of my own creating might be sketched as *faultily!*"

It was characteristic of the man to be able to do with worse tools what a skilled workman with every modern appliance would very probably fail in, because of the strength of inspiration which lay behind. Where the inspiration failed, the result was hopelessly bad. For example, when he wanted to take the place vacant by poor Seymour's untimely death, as illustrator of 'Pickwick,' there could be and was no hesitation about his rejection. It requires, most particularly, great technical skill to translate the thoughts of another into picture. And this skill Thackeray certainly did not possess. Like William Blake, though of course *longo intervallo*, his pictures, divorced from their explanatory



letter-press, are chaotic and unintelligible. Wedded thereto, they are pretty nearly all that pictorial illustration should be.

I want in this article to point out and illustrate one particular phase of Thackeray's deliberate and unsparing use of himself, as not only a psychological model, to which I have alluded above, but also as a painter's model. It is but a small matter, but one, I am inclined to think, which will be of interest to all admirers of his high-towering genius.

Thackeray's drawings are generally looked upon as essentially the garniture of his more serious work, but it must not be forgotten that the pictorial was a distinct and important phase of his artistic development. One might indeed almost say that he was a picture-maker at the quadrature, a novelist at the full.

As novelist, we know that the covering which he drew over what he felt were his own shortcomings was in effect diaphanous. He never intended to hide himself. He no more expected people to be unaware of his presence than the Queen does when she travels as the Countess of Balmoral. All he wanted was that his confidences should be respected. One is reminded of Addison's heroine "whose bosom appeared all of crystal, and so wonderfully transparent, that I saw every thought in her heart."

So it was too in his pictures. He looked in the glass and poked fun at himself and others with the utmost impartiality. His broken nose, his "goggles," his pursed-up mouth, "those blue eyes with child-like candour lit," indeed himself we find cropping up in his drawings in the most unexpected manner, and in all sorts of compromising and ridiculous situations.

He was not over-considerate of his own feelings when, in America, as Trollope tells us, "he met at dinner a literary gentleman of high character, middle-aged, and of most dignified deportment. The gentleman was one whose character and acquirements stood very high—deservedly so—but who, in society, had that air of wrapping his toga round him, which adds, or is supposed to add, many cubits to a man's height. But he had a broken nose. At dinner he talked much of the tender passion, and did so in a manner which stirred up Thackeray's feeling of the ridiculous. 'What has the world come to,' said Thackeray out loud to the table, 'when two broken-nosed old fogies like you and me sit talking about love to each other?' The gentleman was astounded, and could only sit wrapping his toga in silent dismay for the rest of the evening."

So we see all through, in castigating others he never dreamt of sparing himself. In a collection of his letters, published by Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., there is an admirably humorous pen-and-ink drawing by him of an imaginary equestrian statue of himself. If any one for a moment doubts that the face of Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh is that of Mr. William Makepeace Thackeray, transferred from a body of six foot four inches to one of at least a foot shorter, they have but to put the above sketch side by side with half the pictures in the Christmas books to be convinced. It only differs from these portraits of M. A. Titmarsh in that the six foot four is, instead of being curtailed, rather accentuated than otherwise.

Or, if additional evidence is wanted, compare with these the portrait of Thackeray in the picture of the Fraserians, published at the beginning of 'A Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters,' by Daniel Maclise. The likeness of this face to that of Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh is undeniable.

At the commencement of 'Mrs. Perkins's Ball' we find an exceedingly clever blending of ball-room exigencies with the requirements of the conventional title-page, and, tucked away in the right-hand corner behind Mr. Beaumaris, "the handsome young man," we find Mr. Michael Angelo Thackeray, as we are inclined to call him, broken nose, spectacles and all.

Nor must mention be omitted of that young gentleman's armorial bearings which surmount the door—a pair of spectacles crossed on a shield, surmounted by a fool's cap and with two jesters' wands as supporters.

Thackeray did not habitually sign his drawings; but in some few instances this crossed pair of spectacles may be found giving a picture his *imprimatur*. As one example of this, the reader may refer to the frontispiece to 'Dr. Birch and his Young Friends,' where this symbol will be found on the paper held in the dunce's hand.

On the title-page to 'Our Street,' the intent observer will again discover Mr. Titmarsh's portrait. Miss Clapperclaw is here represented looking out of her accustomed window and keeping her eye on the doings of her neighbours. She has screwed against that window, at a convenient angle, one of those detective-looking glasses by which an occupant of the room can see without herself being seen. In that mirror behold the reflection of an infinitesimal gentleman walking down the street, so small indeed that three of him, top-hat, spectacles

and all, might easily be accommodated on one's little finger-nail.

On page 70\* of the same Christmas book we find him drinking tea in the background, whilst the detestable Clarence Bulbul in the foreground is telling the lovely Miss Pim that she would fetch twenty thousand piastres in the market at Constantinople. On page 76 we find him talking to the charming Miss Short, whilst Charley Bonham, near at hand, is pouring out his fulsome rhapsodies in the ears of Diana White. "Lovely, lovely Diana White; were it not for three or four other engagements, I know a heart that would suit you to a T." On page 78, the incorrigible Michael is flirting in the doorway with Clarissa Newboy, who is in a pink *paletôt* trimmed with swansdown. That is the last we have of him as a gay bachelor in 'Our Street.'

He next turns up in 'Doctor Birch and his Young Friends' as assistant-master in the Academy at Rodwell Regis, and Professor of the English and French languages, flower-painting and the German flute. On page 87 we find him engaged in teaching "the young idea how to shoot." On page 100 he is discovering Miss Birch *eating jam with a spoon out of Master Wiggins' trunk in the box room*. On page 113 he witnesses Lord Gaunt's eldest son, the noble Plantagenet Gaunt-Gaunt and nephew of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Steyne, flirting with Miss Rosa Birch. "What a pretty match it would make! It is true she has the sense on her side, and poor Plantagenet is an idiot; but there he is, a zany with such expectations and such a pedigree!"

In the Christmas of 1850 again we have our young gentleman making a voyage on the Rhine in company with "the Kickleburies" and other distinguished personages. On page 163 he flirts with pretty Miss Fanny. On page 175 he is making a wry face over the natural waters of Rougetnoirburg. On page 183 he gives a withering glance of scorn at the inconstant Fanny Kicklebury, who has thrown him over for the heavy dragoon. Whilst on page 193 we find him contemplating that German bed which eventually he was not destined to enjoy alone, but to pass the night in company with anthropophagous wretched reptiles who took their horrid meal off an English Christian.

\* The references in this article are to the collected 'Christmas Books,' in Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.'s Popular Edition.

As early as 1842, before his permanent connection with *Punch*, we find in the 'Irish Sketch Book' two or three portraits of himself with uncurtailed body. The first and only noticeable one is a picture of Mr. Titmarsh sitting on a crowded Irish car, with his arm encircling the waist of a demure little Irish lass, and it was not until a hideous row of houses informed them that they were at Killarney that his companion suddenly let go his hand and, by a certain uneasy motion of the waist, gave him notice to withdraw the other too. "And so," he goes on, "we rattled up to the 'Kenmare Arms';" and so ended, not without a sigh on my part, one of the merriest six hours' rides that five yachtsmen—one Cockney, five women and a child, the carman, and a countryman with an alpeen, ever took in their lives." But life is not always rosy, and woman is not always kind, and the next day he gets a severe snubbing from his yesterday's fair and kind companion. *Sic transit.*

In his drawings for *Punch* we are not often favoured with his "counterfeit presentment." Indeed in only one of his larger pictures does he make use of himself as a model. The scene is laid in a railway carriage on the Great Western Railway. Thackeray is represented, apparently reading the *Sunday Times*, but in reality listening to a conversation between an old gentleman and a Miss Wiggetts. By Thackeray's side is a co-contributor to *Punch*. Who this is I have not discovered.

The above-mentioned is one of a series of drawings called "Authors' Miseries."

He wrote many papers for *Punch* under the pseudonym of "Our Fat Contributor," but in none of these does he identify himself with the author, or favour us with a representation of his own personal appearance.

In an account of adventures at Brighton it is some one very different from Thackeray who, mounted on one of Jiggot's hacks, goes out riding with young Goldenose and his lovely sister Violet to his own very great satisfaction, until he is induced to change horses with Captain de Bosky, and finds the change from the animated Sedan-chair he had hired to the wicked-looking beast, which rejoiced in the name of "Purgatory," anything but a change for the better.

Later on, however, in 'Brighton' by "*Punch's* Commissioner," which place he calls "London *plus* prawns for breakfast and the sea air," we have a portrait of him without his spectacles, with his full six foot four complement of body reclining comfortably in, and

absolutely filling an ordinary fly. It is driven by a delicious postillion in a pink striped-chintz jacket, which may have been the cover of an armchair once, and straight whitey-brown hair and little wash-leather inexpressibles—the cheapest caricature of a post-boy eyes have ever lighted on.

In 1847, the same epidemic was raging that we have been groaning under in this present year of grace, and he contributed an amusing article called "Punch and the Influenza," accompanying it with a series of sketches of the scenes which Mr. P. saw as he called on his suffering contributors.

"The celebrated Br—wn," as he calls himself, "was found thus" (here follows a spirited sketch of himself). "Yes; he was in a warm bath composing those fine sentiments, which the reader will recognize in his noble and heart-stirring articles of this week, and as resigned and hearty as if he had been Seneca. He was very ill, and seemingly on the point of dissolution, but his gaiety never deserted him.

"'You see I am trying to get the steam up still!' he exclaimed, with a sickly smile and a look of resignation so touching, that Mr. Punch, unable to bear the sight, had only leisure to lay an order for a very large amount of £ s. d. upon the good-natured martyr's clothes-horse, and to quit the room."

Again, in 'Sketches and Travels in London,' we find a full-length portrait of him standing bolt upright, and facing the reader alongside of, and illustrating the first monosyllable "I" of the letter to "Bob" called "Out of Town," to say the least, an original method of announcing an author's identity. In the same series we find him in "Mr. Brown takes Mr. Brown the younger to the Club," having a little fun at his own expense. The article opens with a picture of young Horner lying on his back in the library fast asleep, with 'Pendennis' resting unread on his stomach. He made use of the same idea in one of the series 'Trials of Authors,' but in this latter did not make himself the hero of his own fun.

These, then, are a few of the many occasions upon which Thackeray used himself as an artist's model. The admirers of this great man, who has been ranked by no mean authority with Shakespeare and Balzac, will find it interesting to have an idiosyncrasy of this kind, superficial though it is, brought to their notice. Surely none, who have ever been in more than surface touch with the master, can ever fall away from allegiance to him, and it is one of my principal objects in writing this paper to



so bring others into contact with his genius that, by getting them first to take an interest in a master which is not essentially inherent, they may be tempted to search further and find those constituent principles which are more worth the seeking.

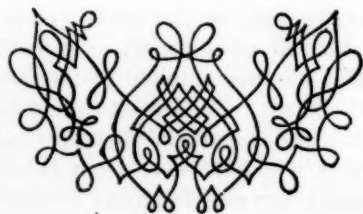
Rembrandt, Rubens, Velasquez, indeed nearly all the greatest of the world's painters, have given us portraits of themselves, but they have taken good care, one and all, to so arrange the lights and pose as to give us the man of genius with his profoundest intellectual expression. It was, I think, left for Thackeray to portray himself in the most unbecoming lights and under the most undignified conditions.

It was a deep-seated principle with him always to taste the quality of his own whip before he flagellated the shoulders of others. And, if we find this in studying his pictures, how much more do we find him unsparing of himself in his writings! In using himself as a whipping-boy for our sins he probably believed that he was making himself as despicable as a Rousseau. He forgot that, in laying bare his foibles, his weaknesses, the evil promptings of his heart, he could not altogether conceal from view his moral force, his human sympathies, and his hatred of cant and meanness.

"Each thought was visible that rolled within  
As through a crystal case the figured hours are seen ;  
And heaven did this transparent veil provide,  
Because he had no evil thoughts to hide."

Let us not then in these days of hustle and excitement forget altogether the man who preached a life-long sermon from the text *Vanitas Vanitatum*. He has a lesson for us all which we shall do well to learn.

GEORGE SOMES LAYARD.



## GREAT STEAMSHIP LINES.

### VI.—EAST THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL.

ALTHOUGH the history of almost every steamship line now finally established is full of records of arduous struggles, of great disasters, and of well-earned success, that of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company is the nearest to romance of them all. It includes in its story the making of the Overland Route, the improvement of the route by Lieutenant Waghorn, and the cutting of the Suez Canal, which has done so much towards the development of Oriental trade. In its character there is something quasi-official, something half-military; its mail system alone makes it almost as much an integral portion of the Empire as the very navy itself; it is difficult for the majority of Anglo-Indians to imagine India reached by any other line of steamships; the very decks of its vessels have become, as it were, classic ground in light literature.

This line, so commonly called shortly the P. & O. that many people not conversant about steamships imagine that title one word of unknown meaning, was founded in 1837. Even among the less ignorant, very few know that the Peninsula referred is *the* Peninsula of Spain and Portugal, and not that of Hindostan, to such an extent has the Oriental business of the Company overshadowed the merely European trade with which it began. In those days, more than half a century ago, the mails went from Falmouth to Lisbon by sailing vessels, "packets," as they were commonly called, which frequently took three weeks on the passage. Messrs. Willcox and Anderson of London, when they induced the Government of that day to subsidize vessels for a monthly service to Vigo, Spain, Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz and Gibraltar, practically founded the Peninsular and Oriental Company, which now owns 198,000 tons of shipping, and carries the mails to the Farthest East.

The next step taken was extending the line to Malta and Alexandria, and in 1839 the Company determined to run vessels between Suez and India. Up to this time the East India Company had steamships on that route, but did not afford the travelling public any great satisfaction. The P. & O. boats now went as far afield as Ceylon, Madras and Calcutta. In 1884, with a further subsidy, they put steamers on the route to Singapore and Hong-Kong.

The Overland Route between the Mediterranean and the Red Seas has seen several changes in character. Long before Europe was inhabited by Teutonic races, dwellers in Egypt and Arabia made their journey on the backs of camels. Then in 1845 Lieutenant Waghorn of the Royal Navy opened it to European travel. In those days travellers landed at Alexandria, and the first portion of the journey was accomplished in barge-like boats towed by steam-tugs in the Mahmoudieh Canal. From Atfeh, where the Canal enters the Nile, steamers ran to Cairo, 120 miles distant. Thence the route lay across the desert 90 miles long, which took some 18 hours. The transport of cargo by such primitive methods was even more difficult than that of passengers. Everything was carried by camels. Not only was cargo carried thus, but the water for the wayside stations and the coal for the Company's steamers in the Red Sea also. It was absolutely cheaper to transport it in this way than to send it round the Cape of Good Hope in sailing vessels. The opening of the railway across the Isthmus of course revolutionized matters greatly, but the cutting of the Suez Canal at first threatened to ruin the P. & O. Company.

The results of the Suez Canal on trade, and the shipping trade generally, are even yet hardly appreciated by the outside public. It is the Canal which has accentuated the natural tendency of steamships to supplant sailing vessels. For one thing these latter could not easily use the new road to the coast on account of the cost of towage, while the Red Sea is so liable to calms that it becomes dangerous to large ships which are not under the control of steam. Moreover, the date of the opening of the Canal approximates closely to the common introduction of the compound and comparatively high-pressure engines. Now too began the rapid differentiation of steamboats into passenger and cargo boats. The result of this is seen in the rise of the British India Steam Navigation Company, which started soon after the opening of the Canal with four boats, bought from the Wilsons

of Hull. This line is the great cargo line of the East, and owns some 260,000 tons of steamers, if the British India Associated steamers are considered part of it, as they may very properly be. The P. & O., on the other hand, has become more purely passenger-carrying than it was, even though it owns at present some six cargo boats.

Independently of the change in the character of the vessels engaged in the trade, the effect of the Canal has been to so enlarge and specialise Oriental business that the entrepôt, or distributive business of London, has been seriously interfered with. Much of the cargo which formerly came to that city, now goes direct to Continental ports of distribution. Yet it is only relatively, not positively, that London has fallen off. The Belgian, Dutch and German trade has so increased, that it pays to load directly for their ports, whereas, in the old days, London was their trade centre.

The new conditions after the opening of the Canal necessitated an entire change in the methods of the P. & O. The newer, faster and cheaper steamers woke the Company up. Their comparative monopoly was threatened, the revenue fell off nearly half a million. And in these circumstances the English Post Office did its very best to ruin a company which had done more in the way of fast and regular mail-carrying than any other line of steamers at that time. For some curious red-tape reason, the Post Office refused to allow the mails to be taken through the Canal, although the Company offered to lessen very materially the time taken to convey the mails to Bombay, China and Australia. Finally the authorities consented to allow this to be done, provided the Company would agree to take some £30,000 per annum less. This was not accepted, and the contracting parties quarrelled. The result was that the Directors landed the mails at one end of the Canal, sent them overland and picked them up at Suez, as had been done before the Canal was opened. And the Post Office could not prevent them doing so, for the Company were acting in strict accordance with the letter of their contract. Finally the quarrel was patched up in 1874, though the Company had to consent to take £20,000 less per annum. But from that day the mail-carrying business of the Company has been such as to afford even the most hide-bound officialism little chance of grumbling. Looking up the records, published by the P. & O., it will be seen that out of 468 mail deliveries during the last three years, only seven instances occurred when the mails

were even an hour late. On the other hand, 457 mails reached their destinations in advance of contract time. For the management of this Company is not behind the times. Vessels have lately been added to the fleet which are over 6000 tons and 7000 H.P. Considering the length of the voyages, these vessels are quite large enough and powerful enough to pay. It is to be remembered that, owing to the expense of coal, very great speeds cannot be maintained in long voyages if any profit is to be expected.

And now-a-days, seeing how low outward freights have fallen, it is a curious question as to whether cargo-carrying from England really pays at all. Present freights are now down in some cases to less than 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton. This hardly pays the Canal dues. It is the homeward cargo trade which is really valuable. And this is greatly in the hands of the British India Steam Navigation Company, at any rate as far as India itself is concerned, with their 102 vessels. A very large proportion of the smaller boats run on the coast of India, only coming home when it is necessary to renew or refit them. They pick up cargo everywhere, and trans-ship it into the larger vessels running on the great trunk lines. They are ready to forward goods on through bills of lading to the most inconsiderable ports; they carry native passengers, and take Moslem pilgrims over the sea on their way to Mecca. But their business is not confined to India, it takes in Burmah, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, New Guinea, and even New Ireland to the north-east of New Guinea; they send vessels to Queensland and thence round Australia; they run south from Bombay to Mauritius; their vessels are well known in the Persian Gulf; and rounding Cape Guardafui they go to Mombasa, Lamu, and Zanzibar, being there nearly in touch with the Castle Line. And this gigantic branch of the business is hardly twenty years old yet!

It is probable that the Australian part of the trade is the least profitable, both to the Peninsular and Oriental and the British India Steam Navigation Companies. The Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company compete with them there, and so does the Orient Line. Some time ago there was an arrangement made between many of the rival companies similar to the "pooling of profits" practised by Western American railroads, but one private ship-owner who took £15,000 a year out of the "pool" was not satisfied and broke loose. As he has yet some years to run of a contract to take home meat from Queensland at a profit



which enables him to cut outward freight to nothing, the effect has been disastrous to those companies which have no heavy mail subsidies to help them. This, of course, is only one example of excessive steamship competition.

As regards the passenger trade to the Far East, not including Australia, it is to be noted that neither of these two great companies carry other than first and second saloon passengers in their large vessels. This is due, of course, to the fact that there is no such thing as emigration to Oriental countries. Seeing that they are not pressed to provide this accommodation, it might have been expected that a company like the P. & O. would have succeeded in solving a problem of passenger accommodation which is, not unnaturally, of burning interest to those who are compelled to take long sea-voyages, and that is the question of single-berth cabins. To most men, and certainly to every woman, it is intolerable to have to share a cabin with a stranger. The want of privacy is the sole thing which makes ocean travelling repugnant to many people. To share a double-bedded room in old-fashioned inns in the coaching days was bad enough, but at any rate there was a reasonable space to move in. It is not too much to expect that single berths shall be the rule. Nowadays it is necessary to pay at least 50 per cent. to secure the vacancy of the second berth. It should be so arranged that a less price would pay the owners of the vessels. There might be a loss of about 33 per cent. in space, though it would probably be less, if the single-berth plan were adopted. In some steamers there are berths, dovetailed, so to speak, one being above and the other below, yet both in separate cabins. The public has yet to be told why this could not be more generally arranged. I believe that one of Wilson's new boats running to Norway is constructed on this plan. Even if it meant a considerable rise in fares, travellers would be ready to pay the necessary increase.

It does not seem wholly extravagant to suppose that some of these large companies might find it worth their while to join together to solve not only this problem, but many others which bid fair to become pressing before very long. And one is the question of increase of speed. When first commencing this series of papers, I was of opinion that faster speeds were only a matter of increased boiler space and more powerful engines. But a criticism of my remarks in 'Invention' has since led me to alter that opinion. The writer said, "Engine power is of course a prime factor in any question of increased speed, but that to our

minds does not present anything like the same practical difficulty as to the best speed-giving lines of hull construction. Ever since the "swift triremes" of the ancient world evoked the admiration of contemporary critics, the problem of the best lines has vexed the soul of ship-builders. How little the progress made really is, may be judged from the fact that a Chinese slipper-boat or a Malay prahu will give odds to the prime specimens of a dock-yard or private ship-builder's outturn, and beat it at nearly every point of sailing. The Chinese were ridiculed some fifteen years ago for putting engines into some of their lighter junks to cruise after pirates. But it was found after all that, except in heavy weather, the duck-breasted, bamboo-sewn, unwieldy native craft could actually steam better than Her Majesty's gunboats.

The writer went on to say this led to the conclusion that if smooth weather only were met with, the problem would be robbed of half its difficulty; for in an Atlantic gale neither ducks nor junks could hold their own. This made me remember that I once saw in the lake in St. James's Park, when a tremendously heavy gale was blowing in London, a number of ducks riding head to sea, "hove to," as it were, and making, in nautical phraseology, very "good weather" of it, in waves which would inevitably have swamped any model boat of the same size as these birds, if it had not been built on something the same natural lines. If the problem is to find speed with seaworthiness, as it undoubtedly is, the model of the duck seems to promise very well. It is to be remembered that in making our steamers deep and sharp we are probably led away by the build of sailing ships. Builders have by no means shaken themselves free of tradition; they have not yet learned that when the propelling power is below the surface of the water, as it is in steamers, that the lines required to give the best results will in all likelihood be very different from those needed when the propelling force is above, as in the case of the wind. It is evident that in most winds, indeed in all except when the vessel has it dead astern or a little on the quarter, the leverage of the deeply set hull is needed to prevent leeway. But in a steamer the only leeway is not an incident in her motive force, it is caused by her height out of water. The power of the wind on a sail area often tends to drive a vessel down; the power of the screw lifts, and would lift still more if the vessel had a rising floor forward. This suggests that we have been on the wrong tack in building steamers of a narrow beam and great draught. It is worthy of serious note

that the resistance increases much more with the draught than with an extended beam. A very significant, if slight, illustration of this may be found in thrusting even so small a thing as a light walking-stick into the water as we move along in a row-boat. After a certain depth, and that not a very great one, a man's whole strength is unable to keep the stick at right angles with the surface of the water. It has been proved by American yacht-builders that great beam and light draught must inevitably pay as far as speed is concerned. If the danger of capsizing were by any means entirely obviated, even large sailing vessels might be broad and shallow. The fastest things in the world, driven by wind, are the ice-yachts on the frozen Hudson, where the draught is absolutely nil. It is true that they are dangerous and may capsize, but in steamers the only danger of their "turning turtle" comes from their want of beam when they are light, as in the case of the sinking of the *Austral* in Sydney Harbour.

The modern small cargo, with very limited engine power, seems to some extent to point the way. Such a tramp steamer as I spoke of in my last article, is bluff in the bow and round or indeed almost flat in the bottom; yet she easily goes  $8\frac{1}{2}$  knots. It is at least probable that her speed might have been greater had she been broader in the beam and still less in draught. The future fast boat will very possibly be a broad-beamed, shallow boat, with a great rise in her floor. I cannot but remember seeing a lake steamer built in British Columbia. She was nothing but a gigantic 'scow' or punt; a parallelogram in form, with the beam almost half the length, and a draught of about four feet when loaded. Yet with primitive engines and small power, she ran 12 knots, and passed the "riffles" or rapids between the Kamloops and Great Shushwap Lakes without any difficulty.

If such corporations as the Peninsular and Oriental, and the British India Steam Navigation Companies, to say nothing of the other great lines, were to join together, employ the best available men, and make a series of exhaustive experiments *à priori*, without being hampered by false analogies and mere tradition, it would be no vague dream to expect that land and sea travel would be more equal in point of speed.

One point of considerable interest to Englishmen is that the Peninsular and Oriental Company employ by far the largest proportion of Lascars, or East Indian sailors, in manning their vessels. The word "Lascar" is usually loosely employed by

seamen to include Malays and almost any true Oriental. The English sailor is not, as a rule, accurate in his employment of general terms, for to him "Dutchmen" include all races from Holland northward to Scandinavia and Finland, and "Dagos" all Europeans south of Flanders as far as Greece. Sir Thomas Sutherland, the Chairman and leading spirit of the P. & O. Company, is in favour of employing Lascars in the proportion of at least two and a half to one Englishman, though it is probable if his boats used the Cape route, taken by the Shaw, Savill and Albion boats, and ran in latitudes of cold and stormy weather, he would change his opinion. I remember being off Cape Leuwin, the south-west point of Australia, in a sailing vessel, in which only seven out of forty-five Lascars would go aloft to shorten sail in what might, without exaggeration, be described as a hurricane. Generally speaking, they are not trustworthy in any great emergency. It seems a pity that there is no greater desire to employ Englishmen in English vessels, seeing that we may any day need seamen for the navy who have been trained in the right school. The reports continually set about as to English sailors being drunken and hard to manage, are for the most part libels. The fact of the matter is that Englishmen, when properly treated, are as fine sailors and as well-behaved men as can be found from Scandinavia to the Grecian Archipelago; but nowadays they require better treatment than they get. Overworked as they are on undermanned ships, it is little wonder that they drink when ashore. But better treatment always gets better service. If that is not given, naturally the less advanced races will be more subservient. In the minds of few seamen before the mast is there any doubt that the occasional preference among ship-masters and owners for "Dutch" crews is due to their greater readiness to put up with hard fare, poor wages, and insulting language. Although there may seem to be some excuse for the P. & O. employing Lascars on the ground that they stand the hot weather in the Red Sea better than Englishmen, such an excuse is seen to be very hollow, when our countrymen can work in the stoke-hold of the very vessels whose decks are reckoned too hot for Europeans.

The following condensed statistics concerning the Suez Canal traffic, though often published, are always of interest. In 1870 the net tonnage passing through the newly-opened way was 436,609 tons; in 1875, 2,009,984; in 1880, 3,057,421; and in 1885

it reached a maximum of 6,335,753 tons. In two following bad years it dropped half a million tons. As to the receipts of the Canal, in 1870 they amounted to 6,387,205 francs; in 1880 they were 40,737,438; in 1887, 59,198,627 frs. Of the traffic, over 75 per cent. in 1887 was English tonnage.

MORLEY ROBERTS.

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### BY LETHE'S BANKS.

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IF I, to-night, should stand beside that wave  
Where men the burden of remembered sin  
Lay down—if all that has and might have been  
Were heavy then on me, the tortured slave  
Of Furies crime-begot—I would not save  
My soul the haunting horror of past sin  
Nor from that gracious flood by one draught win  
The boon of sweet forgetfulness I crave.

For better 'twere that through eternity  
The vision of life's sea with brooding night  
Black, storm-swept, strown with wrecks should curse my sight  
But over which one lone, pure star you beam,  
Than, dearest, that I take from that dull stream .  
A life regenerate that knows not thee.

INIGO DEANE.





## BEGUN IN JEST.

BY MRS. NEWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "HER WILL AND HER WAY," "WITH COSTS,"  
"THE LAST OF THE HADDONS," &c.

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### A ROLAND FOR AN OLIVER.

MABEL had ceased to find any pleasure in joining the luncheon party. But Mrs. Brandreth, whose invitations had at first been so unwillingly given, now made a point of the governess appearing with the children, and this notwithstanding—perhaps partly on account of—the evident reluctance with which she was obeyed. She had been made to give invitations against her will, and now it pleased her to retaliate by making Mabel accept them against hers. She saw that it was an ordeal to Mabel, and thought she understood why. Mr. Harcourt was paying his hostess a great deal of attention, and the governess's grave, not to say angry, looks seemed to bear but one interpretation. Think what Reginald might about it, Miss Leith must have begun to indulge hopes of attracting Mr. Harcourt herself, and, now that she was obliged to give them up, could not conceal her disappointment.

"It looks very much as though she were jealous," thought Mrs. Brandreth, not averse from the idea that she could be the cause of jealousy in an attractive girl of eighteen.

Mabel, in fact, very much disapproved of Gerard's bearing towards his hostess, but for a very different reason from that imputed to her.

"Why cannot she see that he is amusing himself at her expense?" she thought, looking on with angry eyes. "Why does he pay her those stupid compliments? Why does she permit him? She ought to be offended, and she ought to make it evident to him that she is!"—throwing back her head and

looking offended enough for both. She found it difficult to prevent herself giving more open expression to her thoughts, and to reply to Gerard's occasional word to her as the governess should.

Had not Mrs. Brandreth been under the impression that she had discovered the cause of Mabel's bearing towards Gerard, she might have suspected that the two knew more of each other than they wished it to be thought they did.

Aubyn was just himself in his demeanour towards Mabel, treating her precisely the same as he would any other lady in her position—with courtesy and respect. But Gerard took such evident and elaborate pains in acting the part of a stranger, that he sometimes rendered the position very difficult for her. What was worse, she was beginning to see that he was doing this from malice prepense, with the express purpose of causing her to forget the rôle she was playing, and make herself ridiculous for his private amusement.

Deferentially addressing the governess, he would ask for information upon some out-of-the-way question in constitutional history, or what not, which she angrily told herself was only meant to expose her weak points.

"Statute 'Quia Emptores' indeed! He must know that she was not likely to be familiar with that; and as though he wanted information and had not everything at his fingers' ends. It is really too bad!"

But when one day he went further, suavely inquiring how it was she had so much patience with her little charges and contrived to manage them so well, even "daring" to express his opinion that hers must be a delightful occupation, she hurriedly took up the glove and prepared for battle.

"Do you really think so, Mr. Harcourt? Have you had experience in the way of teaching, or any other special kind of work? I know men of means and leisure like to show their capabilities for doing something in these days."

Those who knew him well were aware how much Gerard Harcourt enjoyed getting a counter-thrust of this kind. But he looked properly impressed and disconcerted, only giving her in return, for her special behoof, a momentary flash of humour from between his half-closed eyelids, as he deprecatingly replied:

"No; I cannot claim to have had experience in any special work, Miss Leith."

"But do you not employ yourself in any way then,

Mr. Harcourt?" she urged. "Do you really mean that you do nothing—not even read? It must be so very annoying to have to ask for information. At Oxford, too, were you not? I cannot imagine how you contrived to avoid knowing something of such subjects as you come to me about. Strange, is it not, Mr. Aubyn?"

"It does appear rather strange," he smilingly replied, entering into the spirit of the jest. "But I must leave him to defend himself. He may perhaps be able to do that much—eh, Harcourt?"

Gerard was passing his hand slowly over his moustache, giving her a glance that showed her he accepted the challenge.

"And now I shall be demolished," thought Mabel, "unless I can make a last *coup* and my escape at the same moment."

Mrs. Brandreth looked at the girl in cold surprise. She came to Gerard's rescue with a few words to the effect that people of means and position were not called upon to work in the same way as must those who had their living to get. Nor was it, in her estimation, desirable they should.

"It is the craze just now, I know; but it seems to me more right and proper to keep in one's own sphere, whatever that may be."

Gerard gave her a courteous little bow of appreciation and acknowledgment, as he gently replied:

"Yes; it appears to me a debatable question, that of the rich setting up as workers. It may be all very well when done so as not to compete, nor interfere with, the needs and gains of professional workers. But——"

"Ah, that wretched little 'but'!" thought Mabel; "I may be sure that means mischief."

"Would you approve of ladies with large incomes entering your own profession, for instance, Miss Leith, to the detriment of those depending upon it for a living? Would it not be depriving some real worker of a right?"

"How——"—she had almost added "dare you!"—but recollected in time, and also recollected something else. "Oh you dear Mrs. Raynes! Never again will I think slightly of you! How grateful I am to you for showing me what I ought to do." Quietly meeting his eyes, she replied: "That would depend a great deal upon how the rich amateur set about it, I think."

"I do not quite see; pray enlighten me, Miss Leith."

"You seem to require a great deal of enlightening, one way and another, Mr. Harcourt. But I do not mind doing it, so far as it is in my power"—graciously. "I meant there could be no harm in the rich amateur taking the place of the professional worker, if it were only for a time, and he or she arranged to give the weary brain or hands a rest—say in some quiet country home meanwhile—and so enabled them to recruit and recommence with fresh vigour."

Gerard saw at once what had been done, as also did Aubyn, who exclaimed :

"A very good idea, Miss Leith. Both amateur and professional workers would be all the better for such a change in their ordinary lives. A capital idea," he repeated, "and I thank you for it"—his mind at once busily at work as to how best it might be acted upon.

"All very well in theory," put in Mrs. Brandreth ; "but not many people of position would, I think, be found able to carry it out. Every rank of life has its duties, which would leave no time for such-masquerading."

Gerard bowed low, looking duly impressed.

"Do you vote with my sister-in-law or Miss Leith, Harcourt ?" said Aubyn, to force him, if possible, to speak out. "Which is the best side of the argument ?"

Gerard was not to be caught a second time.

"Something must depend upon the fitness of the benevolent substitute, since the employer has also some sort of right in the matter, I suppose."

"Thank you, Mr. Harcourt, certainly they have. We have not too many efficient workers as it is, and I, for my part, should very much prefer engaging one trained and accustomed to do what is undertaken," said Mrs. Brandreth, not without intention.

"Oh !" mentally ejaculated Mabel.

Aubyn had been as quick to see Mrs. Brandreth's meaning, and quietly put in :

"One must suppose at least a moral fitness in the benevolent substitute, and this would have an effect not to be despised."

"I see. You think the benevolent substitutes would at least be able to teach their pupils how to mean well," said Gerard.

"I meant a great deal more than that ;" laughed Aubyn. "And I think Miss Leith understands that I did."

"Oh, but Miss Leith is a professional worker, you know ; and

with not very long experience, I think. After twenty years or so——”

“After that time, I dare say I shall be still more inclined to vote for the benevolent substitute,” put in Mabel.

“I am extinguished.”

“It would take a great deal to extinguish you I think, Mr. Harcourt,” moving towards the door.

“Really!” exclaimed Mrs. Brandreth.

“Pardon,” said Gerard in a low voice, as he held open the door for Mabel to pass out.

“Granted,” she murmured, with a gracious little bend of the head, her eyes mischievously meeting his for a moment, inclined to make the most of her triumph while it lasted.

“Miss Leith takes a great deal upon herself, you see, Mr. Harcourt?” began Mrs. Brandreth, as soon as the door closed. “So very tenacious and ready to take offence, too. She is always treated with the greatest indulgence and consideration here; and yet you see how it is. Governesses seem to be always on the stilts; and one has to be so very careful to avoid offending their pride, or exciting their piques and tempers.”

He made no attempt to defend governesses, giving her only a bow for reply; duly impressed, she imagined, with her wisdom and forbearance. How much more evident were her good qualities to him than to Reginald! But then Reginald himself was so different from—so altogether inferior to—his brilliant friend. This was so manifest to her, that she was quite at a loss to understand how it came about that they got on so well as they did together. Their tastes and sentiments seemed so diametrically opposed—no two men could possibly be more unlike, as seen from her point of view—and what was more, they were each very open in giving expression to their different opinions.

It seemed to her that Gerard was rather lax in his views on certain subjects; but this gave no offence to her. Her own beliefs were not strong in anything or anybody; but she would have expected her brother-in-law to be more disturbed by his friend's sceptical speeches than he seemed to be. With her, Reginald had always been so very decided in expressing his disapproval of any slight deviation from what he considered to be right, and she could not understand why he should be different with Mr. Harcourt. Nor would she have been much



enlightened — incapable as she was of comprehending the characters of the two men—could she have known what passed between them during the hours they spent together about the grounds or in the library.

Their discussions did not lack the charm of variety ; being now earnest and thoughtful, when the object of each was simply to get at the true solution of a question ; now a keen encounter of wits —rapid passes in which quarter was neither given nor desired. But into one subject Gerard could never succeed in getting Aubyn to enter seriously with him, his frequent challenges notwithstanding. In vain did he endeavour to induce the other to recognize what he pointed out it was his duty to do. In vain did he remind Aubyn of his office and responsibility.

"When you have so fine an opportunity, my dear fellow ; the heathen under your very roof ! Have I not at least as good a claim upon you as the Griggs ? You seem ready to expend any amount of energy upon them ; how is it I can't get you to feel your responsibilities in my case ?"

Aubyn smiled. "To tell the truth, heathens of your kind do not much interest me, old man."

"Why ?"

"You are not half earnest enough, for one thing. I have an old cobbler in Grigg's Court who would beat you out and out in that matter. In fact, he gets so excited in argument as almost to require holding down. I've set my heart upon him ; but you—Where would be the credit of proselytizing you."

"Therefore I am to be left out in the cold. I do not quite see where the Christian charity comes in there," said Gerard.

Aubyn laughed outright. "My dear fellow, I am not going to waste my energies upon you. I am reserving them for another field of action."

"But are you not in duty bound to try to——"

"Knock down the obstacles you would put in my way simply for the amusement of seeing them knocked down. A waste of power, if I were inclined to gratify you that way."

"But your cobbler ?"

"My cobbler reads only his own side of the arguments, and it is therefore only right to give him the other ; but you— How hard you are at work amongst the mystics, Harcourt ! Judging by the gaps on the shelves, one might suppose you are getting up evidence all round. Having a tussle with one of the old Fathers just now, are you not ?"

It was Gerard's turn to laugh, although the colour in his face deepened a little. In carrying off books from the library for private reading in his own room, he had not taken it into account that the gaps on the shelves would tell tales. As the other was well aware, he did not pass an idle half hour when he was alone. Wherever he might happen to be staying, it was understood that Gerard Harcourt liked to spend some hours of the day alone, and only the one or two most intimate with him knew how he was employed, it being his whim to appear an idle man. After a moment or two he lightly replied, "Are you afraid of evidence—is that the reason why you will not meet me on your own ground—eh?"

"There is another, at any rate. I might lose my temper, for instance."

"More than with your cobbler?"

"My dear fellow, a great deal more. I shouldn't be bound to make allowance for you as I must for him, and losing one's temper means——"

"Losing a chance with an adversary?"

"To me, it means something more than that," quietly returned Aubyn.

"How do you manage to pull out a thorn of that kind, Aubyn? It might help one to know the kind of discipline you use with yourself."

"Temper? Oh, well, if you care to know, I have no objection to telling you that much. The process is simple enough—at any rate from an outside point of view. When I get into a rage, I just go for a walk."

"Go for a walk!" repeated Gerard. "A mild sort of remedy that!"

"Not so mild as it appears. I sometimes return so completely fagged and footsore that I can hardly hobble to my room, because—well because I do not turn my face homewards until the reaction has set in. I have to go long distances sometimes, I can tell you."

"What a good old fellow you are!"

"No, thank you. I would rather not, Harcourt," with a quiet smile. "That sort of thing seems to do for my sister-in-law, but it doesn't suit me. She and I are not of the same 'school,' as you are teaching her to call it."

"Ah! that brings us back to the discussion of yesterday."

"My dear Harcourt, I don't mean to be brought back."

"That seems like an acknowledgment of weakness, does it not—giving up the point?"

"Seem what it may, I give up nothing. You know it, and that is enough for me," hotly.

"Oh, come; if you are inclined for a walk I should like to accompany you."

Aubyn laughed and reddened, and, quick to see the other's meaning, had himself in hand again. In vain did Gerard endeavour to force him to an attack. Aubyn had his reasons for not choosing to be drawn into discussion in certain directions; one being that he knew Harcourt needed no help of his. As to which of the two had most command over himself in argument, there could be no question. Nothing seemed to ruffle Gerard's temper, and it looked as though he enjoyed nothing so much as ruffling that of others.

Meanwhile, the two young men were daily becoming more appreciative of each other. Gerard was ready enough to yield to Aubyn's persuasions in the matter of prolonging his stay at Beechwoods; although, now that the latter's convalescence was established, he more frequently ran up to town, and the two did not see quite so much of each other as before.

Much as she flattered herself he admired her, Mrs. Brandreth saw very little of Gerald Harcourt during his host's absence. He appeared to be overwhelmed with correspondence, or writing work of some kind, which obliged him to keep closely shut up in the library—in fact, as she had once or twice found, when making occasion to go there, locked in. And it generally happened that when she was walking in one direction, he was going in another. Moreover, he always, with one pretext or another, excused himself from accompanying her in her drives; although, with due regard to the proprieties, she always had one of the children with her at such times. She did not suspect that he was acting of set purpose—with the diplomacy a man of the world uses to defend himself from the wiles of a woman of the world.

Upon the few occasions that Gerard met Richard Noel—which generally happened, as he did not fail to notice, when Aubyn was absent—the two did not get beyond the civility of chance acquaintance. Noel did his best to get upon more familiar terms, and was quick-witted and amusing enough to make an idle hour pass pleasantly. But he failed altogether in his estimate of Gerard's character, and could not understand how

it was that certain subjects, which he expected to be satirized, were treated seriously, and others he thought would be treated seriously, were satirized; or why the pains he took not to differ from, nor cross the other, were so entirely thrown away.

Had he recognized why Gerard sometimes played with a subject, he might also have recognized that it would have been better policy not to laugh with him; just as, had he seen how little Aubyn cared for approbation, he would not have been so laudatory of the schemes for Grigg's Court. Accustomed to appeal to the weaknesses of those he wanted to ingratiate himself with, it did not occur to him that it might not be the way to approach these two. As it was, he could only suppose that with Gerard it was the same as he imagined it was with Aubyn—certain events in the past were remembered against him. In this he wronged them. Both men judged him by what he was then, and would have been ready to take up his cause against the world, had they found him worth defending. In fine, as each was keen enough to detect, he did not ring true.

At his best—when unfettered by motives of what he considered to be policy—Richard Noel did not shine amongst men, nor, to the extent he imagined, amongst women of a higher level than Flora Severn's. He was obliged to be a great deal more on his guard than he cared to be with Mabel. He flattered himself that he was beginning to make his way with her; but it was not without difficulty that he managed to keep up the necessary tone—too highly-pitched and uncompromising for his taste. Not that her conversation was in any degree high-pitched, but that certain subjects, upon which he considered he shone, were shut out. It was simply impossible to pay her the kind of compliments which were acceptable to Flora Severn. Even her beauty was of a slightly too refined order for his taste; although he liked to think it ranked higher in the estimation of others. As a wife, whose wealth and beauty would be the levers to raise him in the world, she would be unexceptionable.

Meanwhile, Mabel was beginning to wish that she did not happen to meet Richard Noel quite so frequently as she now did when walking with the children. Still, under the impression that all he did to help her with them was done simply out of kindness to the governess, she was grateful to him, endeavouring to think that her gratitude was of the same kind as that she felt towards Aubyn. Nevertheless, she knew there was a difference, although she did not as yet perceive in what it consisted. One thing was

certain, she wished she did not see quite so much of Richard Noel, and this she never felt with regard to Aubyn.

It was through Richard Noel, when he one day joined her and the children in the lower grounds, that Mabel heard there was to be a party at the house that evening.

"I may, therefore, hope for the pleasure of seeing you again to-day, Miss Leith?" he added, throwing as much expression as he dared venture to do into his dark eyes.

"No, I think not, Mr. Noel. Oh! the dinner-party? No, it is not at all likely," she returned, with a better understanding now of what a governess might or might not expect.

"But, indeed, you must not refuse"; wondering meanwhile how he could bring the invitation about without arousing his sister's suspicions.

"It would give me very little pleasure, Mr. Noel," she replied.

"I know none of Mrs. Brandreth's friends."

"I hope you will not refuse," he repeated, as they parted.

He might have spared himself the hour's anxious thought afterwards, as to how he could best approach the subject, and compass what he desired with his sister.

"It will be an opportunity for you this evening, Richard, and I hope you will make good use of it," said Mrs. Brandreth, in allusion to his meeting Flora Severn. "I have made the dinner-hour earlier, so that there may be a little dancing afterwards, and Miss Leith can play to us," smiling pleasantly to herself with the reflection that the handsome Mr. Harcourt would be bound to engage his hostess for the first dance, at least. There was, too, the arrival in good time of a box from town containing a wonderful evening gown, upon which Madame Michaud had been begged to concentrate her best powers. If the event was to seem almost impromptu to her friends, it had been carefully thought out and prepared for by herself.

Noel's mind was set at rest; Miss Leith would be present.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### "THE SHAME OF IT!"

It was understood that Mrs. Brandreth was free to play the mistress of Beechwoods in the matter of dispensing hospitalities to the neighbours. It had generally happened that Aubyn found his presence was required elsewhere at such times, and this had



been borne philosophically enough. If he was aware how little he was missed, he was in no way offended thereat. It appeared indeed as though he lent himself to the furtherance of her wishes in the way of absenting himself just at the right moment.

When she mentioned that she supposed it would be necessary to ask the Hursts, Severns, and one or two others for a quiet evening—"Just a friendly little gathering, you know, Reginald;" he had acquiesced readily enough, merely adding: "You will ask Miss Leith, of course, Agatha." She did not at all see why it should be a matter of course that the governess should be included; but, as she had her own reason for requiring Mabel's presence, she did not argue the point with him, pleasantly replying:

"Oh, yes!"

The intimation that she was expected in the drawing-room after dinner was conveyed to Mabel at the last possible moment; and it was made sufficiently plain why she was invited. It was not until the children's bed time—nearly eight o'clock—that she was informed that her services at the piano would be required. She had comfortably ensconced herself in her favourite seat with a book, when Soames brought the message, in a pleasantly modified form, and offered to assist Miss Leith in dressing. Mabel gladly accepted; and remembering that one of her trunks contained evening dress, it was brought in and unpacked by the astonished Soames.

"This would be the right kind of thing, I suppose," said Mabel, indicating a gown of white silk. It looked plain enough, so far as the fashion of it went; but, to indemnify herself for making a gown of such extreme plainness, the modiste had used the richest and thickest of silks to be had; which, with the fine old Flemish lace, put so lavishly about the neck and sleeves, would tell tales to experienced eyes. Mabel put nothing in her hair, and wore no ornament nor scrap of colour, save two or three crimson roses among the lace at her neck, and a fan to match.

Soames had brought with her a large bouquet of Mabel's favourite roses, which she explained had been given her by Mr. Harcourt's man, with his master's compliments, for Miss Leith, adding, with a meaning look, that she thought Wright had been sent to town expressly for them.

A hot flush rose to Mabel's brow, and she lifted her hand to remove the roses; but, after a moment's thought, let them

remain, telling herself that it was only coward conscience that made her afraid. It was quite natural he should send a few flowers to Dorothy's sister; and, as for sending for them, Wright might have had other commissions to execute in town, although he had said nothing about them to Soames.

"Shall I do, Soames?" she asked, as the other put the remaining flowers into a dainty holder. "It is only a small affair, I suppose, and I ought not to be much dressed."

"Do!" ejaculated Soames, gazing at her in unfeigned admiration, and not a little astonishment. To look like that after so simple a process, hurried through in a few minutes! Soames' thoughts reverted to the elaborate preparation gone through in another room of the house earlier in the evening, and wondered how the two women would look standing together.

Mrs. Brandreth had been speculating a little curiously as to what sort of appearance the governess would make after half an hour's notice. The moment her eyes fell upon Mabel, she saw that her own toilet suggested in comparison only elaborate millinery, while Miss Severn's pretty tulle, with its daisies and dew-drops, intended to be so effusively simple, was a failure.

As Mabel passed with easy unconscious grace across the room towards Mrs. Brandreth, one there would have recognized her as the Miss Leith she had met during the season, but that she was very near-sighted, and did not like to use glasses.

"The governess? I thought it was Miss Leith!" said Mrs. Chatteris, peering after Mabel.

"She is Miss Leith; and she is the governess," returned Mrs. Severn.

"Then she cannot be the Miss Leith I mean," thought Mrs. Chatteris, and supposing she had made another of her mistakes, she said no more.

Pausing a moment on her way to exchange a pleasant greeting with the Rector's good-natured little sister, always inclined to be friendly to the beautiful young governess, and lost in admiration now, Mabel presently reached Mrs. Brandreth's side.

"You want me to play, do you not, Mrs. Brandreth?"

"Yes, when we are ready," coldly returned the other; adding, "You were quite prepared for the occasion, it appears."

"No," replied Mabel, not suspecting that Mrs. Brandreth was alluding to what she wore. "I had your message only just now; but it does not take long to dress;" adding pleasantly, "Tell me

when you are ready ; and please to remember that I can manage round dances better than square ones. I could not, I think, recollect the whole of a set," unable to divest her mind of the idea that she was conferring a favour by playing anything.

"I must ask you to practise for next time," a little sharply.

"You must give me longer notice, then," smilingly replied unconscious Mabel, turning to say a few words to Gerard, who had made his way to her side, and thinking how pleasant it was to be in a drawing-room with grown-up people once more.

As she stood with her shapely head drawn slightly back, slim, *élancée*, radiantly beautiful, roses in one hand, and the other hanging by her side, idly swaying to and fro the crimson feather fan, all eyes were drawn to her, and not a few appreciated the picture.

"Where did she get all those roses ? Jennings told me the best had gone off," thought Mrs. Brandreth, her brows contracting as she sharply said, "We will begin with a waltz, Miss Leith."

"Very well," returned Mabel, with a little nod, talking on with Gerard, as she moved slowly towards the piano.

He had been quietly enjoying the scene. How impossible it was for any shafts Mrs. Brandreth could aim to touch her ! How grandly she shone amongst other women in her careless independence and lack of desire to shine ! Not one in the room was, in his sight, worthy to be her handmaiden ! He was for the moment a little off his guard, and there was an expression in his eyes which told something to one or two lookers-on, as he went with her towards the piano.

Miss Hurst, a pretty, dark-eyed girl, not accustomed to be outshone, was quite ready to agree with Miss Severn in her assertion that Mrs. Brandreth was really too forbearing in allowing the governess to make herself so prominent. "The idea of her assuming such airs, and taking up Mr. Harcourt's attention in that way, talking and smiling as familiarly as though they were old friends !"

Mabel had, in fact, for the moment entirely forgotten her surroundings, and the *rôle* she was playing, as she thanked him for the roses, and gave him a message she had that morning received from Dorothy.

He was reminded of his duty by his hostess, and endeavoured to appear sufficiently appreciative of his good fortune in being allowed the first dance, as he turned away with her. His place

at the piano was very quickly taken. Two or three of the most eligible men in the room stationed themselves there, ready to turn over the music, and contend for the honour of holding Mabel's fan or gloves. To Mrs. Hurst's consternation, her only son, just home from Oxford, and, she told herself, quite unaccustomed to the wiles of girls on the look-out for a good match, had not taken his eyes from the governess since the first moment she had entered the room. In vain did the anxious mother call him aside, and remind him that he was bound in common courtesy to dance with some of the young girls present. Impatiently protesting that he hated dancing, and couldn't dance, he walked off to station himself at the piano again, not any the more filially disposed for finding that, in the meantime, his place had been filled up. Others had secured the privilege of waiting upon Mabel, and there was nothing left for him but to gaze at her.

Mabel accepted the little attentions she received all the more graciously as being offered to the governess; although not one there could flatter himself that he had more encouragement than another. Richard Noel had not as yet dared to approach the charmed circle, but had had time during his duty dance with Flora Severn to take some note of what was going on at the piano. He found consolation in the thought of a little plan he had arranged in his own mind. His own turn was coming.

Mabel rattled away cheerfully enough for a while; but after two or three dances had been got through, her attention began to flag, and she found the unaccustomed work wearisome. It was not, perhaps, endured any the more patiently for a chance word or two that reached her respecting Mr. Harcourt's devotion to the widow. "Why does he go on in that way, pretending what he does not mean?" she thought angrily. "It is wrong to Mrs. Brandreth, and still more so to Dorrie! What is his love worth, if it is to have no better effect upon him than this! Could it be that— No!" She hurriedly put the thought away from her. It was only his way of amusing himself, forgetting that he ought not to do that at another's expense. Gerard must be what she believed him. "He *must* be!" But she was irritated, and beginning to be a little curt with her attendant knights, as tired of them and their attentions as she was of the "strumming," and responded to Mrs. Brandreth's "A little quicker, please, Miss Leith," in a way that very soon put the last two or three couples *hors de combat*.

It was Richard Noel's opportunity. After endeavouring to keep Mabel's ten-miles-an-hour pace, both his sister and Flora Severn were fain to go with their partners in search of refreshment. He whispered a word to the good-natured Miss Grantham. She at once took the hint, and, going to Mabel's side, offered to give her a rest by playing a dance or two. It appeared to come about naturally enough, as did Noel's suggestion that Miss Leith would find it very delightful on the terrace, if she were inclined to go there for a little fresh air before supper. The night was warm, but if she were afraid of taking a chill, he would get her a wrap.

"The terrace! Yes; that is just what I should like," returned unsuspecting Mabel, at once taking his offered arm; adding, that she was not in the least afraid of a chill.

"I fear you have found the dance-playing monotonous, Miss Leith," softly began Noel, as soon as they had reached the terrace.

"Yes, it is wearisome to keep on at. This is better, certainly."

A still, hot night; the undulating park, old elms, and glimpses of the sea beyond, tinged with the soft, full radiance of the harvest moon. Mabel stood silently gazing at the scene, her elbow on the balustrade of the terrace, and her chin in her hand.

Richard Noel's pulses throbbed a little wildly. He was about to put fortune to the test; and, at that moment, it was not her money he was thinking of—or, at any rate, not only that. He was sufficiently in love to satisfy his own conscience. He was reminding himself of the necessity for caution. This was not the kind of girl to whom he could talk even as he did to Flora Severn. But there was a very lover-like expression in his dark eyes, and a tender ring in his voice, as he began with some reference to the beauty of the night—the effect of the moonlight upon the scene that lay before them; partly in a glamour of silvery radiance, partly in dim mysterious shadow.

"Shadow," she absently repeated. "Yes; one feels more in accord with the shadow than the light sometimes."

"What can shadows suggest to one who dwells always in—in the light?" he said a little awkwardly, striving to rise to what he took to be her level of sentiment.

"But I don't always dwell in it," with a half-smile, still too much absorbed in her own thoughts to take heed of his tone and looks. "'Sweetness and light' are only an occasional experience to most of us, I fear."

He was longing, yet half fearing, to give words to the appeal



that rose to his lips, when she gathered back her thoughts and went on—

"Do not stay, Mr. Noel. They are dancing again, and I prefer remaining here a little longer."

"Do not send me away, Miss Leith—pray do not, when—when——"

She knew the tone—all too well—and drew back, a troubled look gathering in her eyes. What she had feared was true, then. But, telling herself that he must not be left in doubt, she put in with quiet decision: "I prefer being alone, Mr. Noel."

"Ah, let me speak, and forgive me if I am not able to do so in measured tones. How could I, when the mere hope of gaining your love would be the saving of my soul?" With the thought that the knowledge of certain facts must come to her sooner or later, and that the idea of having the power to reform him might have its attractions for a romantic girl, he hurriedly added: "My life has not been always what it should have been"—feeling that the admission was in itself a virtue which ought to raise him in her eyes—"but——"

"Do not go on, Mr. Noel, I beg of you. I am so sorry; so very sorry!"

"Do not reject me on the impulse of the moment," he urged. "I do not hope to be able to gain your love at once; only let me strive to win."

She sighed, more really touched and sorry for him than she had been for any of her quondam lovers. She imagined he was the first man who had loved her for herself, and she could not find it in her heart to give him his dismissal too roughly.

"Let me but strive to win," he eagerly repeated, taking note of her troubled softened look. "Give me but the faintest shadow of a chance. Let me try to earn the right to work for you, and I will soon prove what I can do." At that moment he really believed he would have been ready to work for her had it been necessary so to do. "I know that I am not worthy of you; no man could be, but my love is at least sincere. Do not scorn it."

"Do you think I could scorn anything real and true, Mr. Noel? I am so sorry, because I am obliged to speak very plainly. In justice to you, I must." Feeling that so much was perhaps due to him, she added, in a low, hesitating voice, the

colour rushing to her cheeks, "I—in truth, I have no love to give any one—now."

"Some one else!" he ejaculated, realizing that there was indeed no chance for him; and his face falling with a sudden remembrance now, that in losing her he lost her fortune. This last was a disappointment quite keen enough to impart to him a sufficiently woe-begone air, as he stood before her with clasped hands, and down-bent head.

Eyes less keen than those looking on might have divined something of what had taken place between the two, and Gerard understood at once. He had just emerged from one of the open windows of the drawing-room; and, although the sounds from within prevented his hearing what was said, he could see plainly enough. He paused for a moment, then came slowly forward.

"Miss Severn has promised you the waltz just beginning, she says, Mr. Noel," always punctilious in using the prefix to the other's name.

"Thanks. Oh yes," turning to re-enter by the window.

As soon as they were alone, Gerard began with elaborate deference: "Pray pardon me, I was obliged to do Miss Severn's bidding."

"What is there to pardon?" she asked shortly; her pride in arms at his tone. She knew him too well to mistake the meaning of his politeness. "Do you mean that I ought not to have been talking out here with Mr. Noel?"

"I thought you might not know what he is. Men of his stamp are apt to make too much of a *tête-à-tête*. You would not like to give him the opportunity for assuming that he had been in any way encouraged."

"I am not in the least afraid that Mr. Noel will misunderstand me, Gerard."

"Why are you so ready to defend him, Mabel?"

"Perhaps because you are so ready to attack."

He smiled, thinking that quite possible. In any case, he knew that Richard Noel had no real cause for triumph. He made the *amende*, and they were presently talking in the old way again.

"Am I not getting on grandly, Gerard? I am beginning to think myself quite a model governess."

"I should not be surprised to hear you had received your dismissal to-morrow."

"Dismissal! Oh, Gerard; why—what have I done?"

"I am afraid you have not shown sufficient reverence for your betters; and, what is worse—" pausing, and gazing at her with smiling eyes.

"Well, what is worse?"

"Ask your dressing-glass."

She was silent; the colour dying out of her cheeks, and her eyes gravely downcast. That was the way he talked to Mrs. Brandreth. After a moment, she said, with a little break in her voice: "You, at least, might know how much I dislike compliments of that kind, Gerard—if they can be called compliments."

"And I do not care to offer you any, certainly not to-night," reverently lifting her hand to his lips, as with deep earnestness he went on, "to-night, when my life seems too poor an offering."

"Your life! I—I do not understand;" her heart beating heavily, with a sudden fear.

"Is not my love my life? Don't you know, Mabel?"

She dragged her hand from his; gazing at him wide-eyed and bewildered. The name of Dorothy trembled on her lips, but was withheld as too sacred to be spoken at such a moment. Then, white and trembling, she ejaculated, in a broken voice: "Oh, what have I done to lead you to think you might talk in that way to me?"

To his dying day, Gerard Harcourt would never forget the expression of dismay—not to say repulsion—in her face. He fell back, his eyes fastened upon her, as she stood with bowed head, twisting her hands together, in a mute misery of shame.

"Do you mean—do you then wish me to understand—?" he began, in a low faltering tone.

"Oh, Gerard! You! When I hoped you were—when you ought to be as a brother to me!"

"My mistake has been great indeed!" He stood gazing at her for a few moments, as one in a dream; then turned, and swaying, and stumbling like a drunken man, went down the terrace steps, and passed out of sight, into the dim shadows of the trees beyond.

She yielded to an outburst of tears and sobs. "I have allowed him to see into my heart. But your mistake is great indeed if you think my love for you has made me as untrue to her as you are, Gerard. Thank God, I am not! Weak, and stupid, and

mad, but not untrue! I shall know that, though he does not, Dorrie. For him, I will care no more, even as a sister—I will not!" Roughly brushing away her tears, she stood sternly gazing out into the night, looking as though she were indeed capable of tearing her love from her heart, and killing it with her scorn. Then she was again bowed down in bitterest shame and misery. What would life be now that she was no longer able to believe in Gerard? Having to give him up seemed as nothing in comparison with having to give up her faith in him! How would she be able to keep up the semblance of sisterly feeling towards him; knowing all the while, he had been unfaithful to her Dorrie? How would she be able to go through the ordeal of constantly meeting him? She had believed that his cynicism was, as he had once said it was, for the "well-meaning that comes to nothing, and the enthusiasm that does not stand wear and tear." What was he now? How much better to have felt that she fell short of his standard, than to know that he himself had lowered it! Hitherto she had been able to think that however different he might pretend to be, he was really unchanged—the same Gerard, true, noble, full of high aspirations, who had won her girlish admiration. Now! What was the man who could make love to both sisters at once?

"Ah, Gerard, if it were only that you were dead! The shame of it! The shame of it!" covering her face with her trembling hands.

"Miss Leith!"

Some one was calling her! She turned, and fled with swift feet along the terrace, and into the house by a side entrance, whence she made her way unobserved up to her own room; and locking the door, threw herself on to the bed, in utter abandonment of shame and misery.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"PECCAVI!"

The sun had been shining a couple of hours when Mabel awoke from the deep sleep into which, towards morning, she had fallen from sheer mental exhaustion. Realizing the necessities of every-day life, she rose, changed her dress, and did her best to make herself look as usual to the sharp little eyes which she knew would be so ready to note the slightest change in her.

In her consciousness, she shrank painfully from meeting even the children. How would she be able to keep up appearances with their elders? she asked herself. There was the bitter thought that, if she were able to do so—if she could conceal the knowledge of what had passed from all the world besides—Gerard would always know that it had been possible to make love speeches to Dorothy's sister. That he had been repulsed was not enough. It ought never to have happened, she said to herself. She must have been to blame—she must! There was at the same time an undercurrent of pity for him in her mind. With the remembrance of the misery in his eyes, as he had turned that last look towards her, and in spite of her attempts to force her thoughts away, her heart still went out to him; and this all the more because she did not exonerate herself. Where was he? Had he gone back to town? What had become of him? She could ask no questions, shrinking painfully from the mention of his name, although Soames looked as if she would be very ready to talk.

It was only by a chance word that Mabel heard Gerard was still in the house. It would be doubly hard for her if he remained there—he ought not to remain—and yet it would be worse for her to go herself. She dared not trust herself to give up the governessing and return home now, until she had in some measure recovered the shock she had received, and was more prepared to meet her sister. How would she be able to meet Dorrie? The very thought caused her face to whiten. No! terribly irksome as the work had become, she must keep on now. It was the price she must pay for her mistake in leaving home.

She was looking quite ill enough to warrant the message she sent by the school-room maid to Mrs. Brandreth, to the effect that she had not been well the night before, and was consequently obliged to go to her room. As it happened, such of the guests as were not going to stay the night at Beechwoods had taken their departure shortly after Mabel's disappearance; and her services being no longer required, Mrs. Brandreth could very well dispense with her presence.

This morning the children seemed more than usually obtuse over their lessons. "Jest is not spelled with a G, Mima."

"I'm sure there isn't another letter that would do as well," murmured rebellious Mima.

"Look out the word."



Mima pulled the dictionary towards her, with an angry jerk.

"If I might put down twelve sevens, and add them up!" said despairing Algy.

"What is tribute money, if you please, Miss Leith?" asked Sissy.

Never had Mabel found them so troublesome and slow of comprehension. She was once more insisting upon twelve times seven, when Aubyn, who had come down by the early morning train to settle some business with the land steward, about which had arisen a sudden complication, entered the room.

"My sister-in-law is getting up an impromptu picnic for to-day, and hopes you will join the party; with the children, if you think they deserve a holiday, Miss Leith."

Mrs. Brandreth's hopes had not been very effusively expressed. Indeed, but for his opportune arrival at the moment, and suggestion of it, she would have had no thought of sending Mabel an invitation.

"What do you say, Mima; and you, Algy?" with the suspicion, after a glance at their downcast faces, that the last clause in his sentence had, in some way, touched their consciences. "Do you think you deserve a holiday?"

"I worried Miss Leith with questions when she was engaged," put in kindly Sissy, coming to the rescue of the others. "And I think she is not quite well."

"We didn't know that, did we, Algy?" hurriedly said Mima, while Algy opined that a picnic would make them *quite* good.

"Run and ask Soames to dress you," said Mabel, not finding it in her heart to deprive them of a pleasure, much as she would have preferred remaining where she was.

"I fear they have been more troublesome than usual," said Aubyn, lingering a few moments after the children had raced away in high glee, looking a little anxiously at Mabel as he spoke. Although he did not now approach the ground marked dangerous with her, he was none the less interested in everything that concerned her.

Her eyes fell, and her fingers trembled about the books she was gathering up, as she murmured something about a headache, and being herself most to blame for the children's shortcomings.

The look of anxiety deepened in his face; but he replied in a

cheerful tone: "We cannot afford to let you have headaches. It will do you all good to have a day's play, I think. They are going to drive to the Weir woods, nine or ten miles from here, and some people are to meet them there. I should like to join you, but I have two or three hours' hard work over some accounts with Grant before I return to town, where I am due to-night at a meeting. I will give Harcourt a hint to do what he can to help you with the children."

"No," she hurriedly put in; adding, as the colour rushed to her cheeks, then almost as suddenly deserted them again, leaving her whiter than before, "please do not—I prefer having them to myself—that is, I—I think I can manage them better alone."

"Very well. As you please, of course," he replied, in a quiet matter-of-fact tone, as though not noticing her agitation. But there was a very grave expression in his eyes as he bade her good-bye, and quitted the room.

Gerard was to be there, then! He had not, as she had hoped, left the place! She was too much absorbed in the thought that he was going to be present, and in endeavouring to prepare herself to meet him without attracting the notice of others, to give any heed to her appearance. Hurriedly putting on a hat, and throwing a wrap over one shoulder, she descended with the children to the hall, where she stood white and still, waiting until their places should be assigned to them in one of the carriages.

When presently Mrs. Brandreth came into her vicinity, Mabel, feeling that something more than the message she had sent might be expected of her, again apologised for her abrupt disappearance the night before.

"It would have been better to let me know you were going; that is all, Miss Leith."

"Yes, certainly it would, but—I was so tired of it; and—" recollecting again, she a little confusedly added: "That is, I had not been accustomed to play so long, and——" At that moment her eyes met Gerard's, grave and troubled, bent upon her, and her words trailed off into silence.

But Mrs. Brandreth's attention was turned in another direction. She had heard the apology, and considering it sufficient under the circumstances, did not take the trouble to listen to explanations, turning away without noticing Mabel's pallor and the sudden break in her voice.

With his sister and Flora Severn present, Noel could not venture to approach Mabel; but he contrived to meet her eyes once or twice with a sorrowful disconsolate expression in his own, which he hoped would not be without its effect upon her. He had arrived at the unsatisfactory conclusion that of winning her heart there was no chance. But he had been quick to notice that he had succeeded in another way—she had evidently been touched by his unselfish love for the governess. If he had not won her love, he had won her sympathy; and his mind was at work as to the use that might be made of the friendship of a romantic girl of eighteen, with a great deal of money at her command; although he was beginning to recognize that her romance was not so entirely unaccompanied by common sense, as he had imagined it must be. She had shown a great deal of interest in what he termed his work, and something surely might be made of this. The loan of even a few hundreds would be the saving of him just then, he said to himself; preferring to use the word “loan” to “gift,” even in his thoughts. Yes; he must talk about sudden losses, and consequent difficulties, and that sort of thing. If this were not sufficient to induce her to take him into her confidence as to her power to help him, involving, as it would, an acknowledgment of her real position, he must afterwards appear to discover that she was the rich Miss Leith, and draw back with the reticence and pride of a poor man, which seemed to take with her.

As for the rest, he must content himself with what was within his reach, the “bird in the hand,” as Agatha termed it. The husband of Flora would at any rate have a roof over his head, food to eat, and clothes to wear. Moreover, he was not obliged to keep his mind on the stretch to come up to her ideal, as he was with the other. With the hope of winning a richer prize, he had been somewhat neglectful of, and less ardent in his tone towards Flora of late; but he had not the slightest misgiving as to his finding it easy enough to recover his position, whenever he might choose to do so. He would begin to make up for lost time at once. There would be opportunity enough, and to spare, at the picnic.

The relations between his sister and himself had become somewhat strained of late, and there was no exchanging confidences with her. She adopted a rather sharp tone with him; and, what was worse, offended his *amour propre* by supposing that he might not succeed in winning Flora Severn.

During a short *tête-à-tête* with him before breakfast, she had reminded him in a few angry words that he had been very lax in his attentions to Flora Severn the night before, and that she was beginning to endure his defection very cheerfully. "Remember, it may be a last opportunity to-day, Richard, and if you neglect your chance I can do no more for you." All of which had the effect of rendering him more irritated with her. Smarting under the consciousness of his failure with Mabel, he was the more ready to resent its being supposed that he could not succeed even with Flora Severn.

The carriages had been brought round, and there was some little laughing discussion as to who was to go with whom. Mabel did not venture a second glance towards Gerard, waiting, to outward seeming, quietly and calmly with the children until places should be assigned them. After all the others had been provided for, Mrs. Brandreth found that there was only the village cart left for herself and a groom; whereat, when it at length penetrated his mind, Gerard found himself in duty bound to offer to drive her, and, after a little graceful hesitation, his services were smilingly accepted.

Gerard first assisted Mabel and the children into the wagonette, but no word was exchanged between them. There was merely a lifting of the hat from him, and an inclination of the head in acknowledgment from her. Afterwards he took his place by Mrs. Brandreth's side, and the procession, as the children delightedly called it, moved on.

"He too has gone through something," thought Mabel, after a momentary glance at him. "He is not so lost to the sense of what is right as to feel no self-reproach." In fact, there were, to those who could see, signs in his face of his having passed through a severe mental struggle. He could set his lips in the form he chose them to take, and keep all expression out of his eyes, but he could not change the ashen hue of his face, and the drawn, haggard look that comes of a night's misery such as he had passed through. Only Wright knew that his master had spent the night in the woods, and re-entered the house when the servants were beginning their morning's work. The attention of more than one had been drawn to him as the morning wore on; and even Mrs. Brandreth presently began to feel a little at a loss how to account for it. But it was not easy to question Gerard Harcourt when he did not choose to be questioned.

Mabel made her "headache" account, so far as it might, for her

depression and taciturnity with the children, and her temples were indeed throbbing painfully. They missed so much her readiness to enjoy with them, her buoyant spirits, quaint little speeches, and appeals to their imaginations, and were telling each other in whispers how much difference it made when Miss Leith's head ached. But the delightful fact remained—they were going to a picnic for the first time, and they could not altogether refrain from questioning as well as speculating about the new pleasure.

"Going to have dinner on the grass and sit upon nothing!" enthusiastically ejaculated Algy.

"And have all sorts of goodies, like being at a party," said Mima. "Afterwards—— What comes afterwards, Miss Leith, dear?"

"Afterwards? Oh, anything you like to do—games of play, or exploring."

"Exploring?"—dubiously.

"Finding out for yourselves the prettiest spots about the place," explained Mabel, making an effort to get away from her own thoughts and enter into theirs. "And there will probably be tea, the water boiled over sticks, which you may help to gather."

"Like real gipsies!"—in high delight.

And leaving their governess to her own reflections again, they whispered confidences to each other as to how they might help to carry out the illusion, by making their hands and faces dirty, tearing rents in their clothes, and contriving to lose their shoes.

The carriages drew up at a turning in the road, where they alighted to walk through a narrow, shady lane in the wood, leading down to the water's edge, a winding river, with here and there a rather deep fall. Gerard once more motioned the groom aside, and himself assisted Mabel and the children to alight. But again no word was spoken, and her one hurried glance towards him showed her that his eyes were downcast, and his lips tightly compressed. As soon as they had alighted, he turned away and joined the others again. Following the rest, increased in number now by four or five who had been waiting for them at the turning, Mabel and her charges walked along the lane, and down the winding path, through shady woods, towards the river. A picturesque, thoroughly English scene; the water leaping down the weir, dancing and sparkling in the sunshine, as it rushed on



again amongst the white stones in its shallow bed ; the rising woodlands on either side, well-shaded turfy nooks and hollows and walks diverging in all directions over the brow of the hill and along the river side ; all combining to render it as fitting a spot as could be chosen for a picnic.

Two or three couples were at once seized with a desire to explore, and were soon lost to sight, their whereabouts now and again indicated by the sweet low laugh of a girl, or the deeper, fuller tones of her companion. Richard Noel stood for a few moments in uncertainty, his eyes following Mabel and the children making their way down towards the river, and once more argued the point with himself as to whether or not he should hazard one more throw for fortune. But he again came to the conclusion that the risk of losing both would be too great, and slowly turned away to go in search of Flora Severn. "It would be easy enough with her," he said to himself. He had only to begin again where he had left off. Moreover, she was not entirely without charm for him. She had, for example, a pretty way of showing her appreciation of his wit and wisdom which was altogether lacking in Mabel. To his surprise and chagrin, he was made to understand that, for the moment at any rate, Flora was able to exist without him.

His late defection, more evident than he imagined, had in fact been another's opportunity. Taking less pains to attract, while secretly encouraging Noel, Flora had appeared to much greater advantage than usual in Wreybourne society, and the owner of a large estate in the county had of late shown an inclination to declare himself. Half reluctant to give up the one bit of romance in her life, she had not met her new admirer's advances very cordially, until she began to feel piqued at Richard Noel's growing coldness. In contrast with this, Mr. Maitland's attentions were now the more welcome, to say nothing of her appreciation of his wealth and influence in the county. He was, to be sure, some years older, and far from being as handsome as the younger man, but she was beginning to recognize that he was a much more desirable *parti*. Moreover, Mr. Maitland had her mother's cordial approval, which Noel had not.

When the picnic was proposed at the breakfast-table, Mrs. Severn had mentioned that the Weir woods were a pleasant drive from the Maitlands' place, and that the brother and sister would, she knew, like to join the party, if Mrs. Brandreth's arrangements permitted, and she was so very kind as to invite

them, and a telegram reached them in time. Mrs. Brandreth saw no objection, and pleasantly acquiesced ; offering to at once send a man to the railway station with the telegram, little suspecting that she was, so to speak, thus putting a seal to her brother's dismissal by Flora.

Noel was quick to recognize that it was not by chance he was left to do the honours of the place to the elderly Miss Maitland, whilst Flora walked serenely off with the brother.

But if Miss Maitland was elderly, she did not feel so. An energetic little woman, with an insatiable thirst for information about any and everything, and not at all above asking questions, or availing herself of any assistance she could get. Pleasantly accepting his not very readily offered services, she at once set off on an exploring expedition, smilingly informing him that he would have plenty to do. She combined business with pleasure, the search of the picturesque with the search for her favourite ferns and mosses and what not, which it was her cavalier's privilege to carry about in a primitive-looking hand-basket. Trotting briskly about, feeling sure there were undiscovered wonders to be found, now in one direction and now in another, chatting meanwhile in a way that obliged him to keep his wits at work to avoid appearing utterly imbecile, Miss Maitland thoroughly enjoyed her hour's exercise, and did not see why he should not do the same.

"I am not young and attractive, to be sure—love-making is out of the question, but young men cannot be always love-making, and I am doing my best to amuse and interest him," thought the little lady.

The children were watching the waterfall and speculating as to why it came over so smoothly at the top and tumbled about so roughly at the bottom, and Mabel standing by, absorbed in reflection, when she heard Gerard's voice.

"Will you give me a few moments, Mabel?" he asked in a low, grave tone.

She turned her eyes to meet his, and shrinking nervously from the ordeal, faltered out—

"Is it necessary?"

"Yes."

Telling Sissy to take care of Algy and Mima, she walked a short distance along the bank, then stood still, waiting in troubled silence for what was to come.

He had been quick to note her first hesitation, the look of fear that came into her eyes; and the strained expression about his mouth grew more marked.

"You are not afraid, Mabel? You do not think it possible I could desire to pain you—again? I only want to ask you to forget what passed last night. How can we two cease to be friends through one mad speech? Your tone—your whole manner—showed me that I must have been mad."

The violet eyes, dim with tears, were turned to meet his, as, in her desire to spare him, she hurriedly put in, in a low, broken voice—

"Ah, do not go on! You would not have talked in—in that way unless I had given you cause to think you might. It is I that was to blame—it is for me to ask pardon, Gerard."

"You! No; you must not blame yourself in any way. It was my own mad folly. Idiot that I was! Will you try to forget, Mabel?"

"Yes," putting out her hand to him. "We must both try to do that—only"—breaking down for a moment again, as she added, "But how can I forgive myself for having seemed to—to—care for you in that way. Ah, Gerard, you must have fancied I did!"

"I see where I was wrong," a little bitterly. "That was made sufficiently evident to me last night. But let all that be considered past and over; and I give you my word of honour you shall not be wounded in the same way again. We are friends, eh, Mabel?"

"Yes, we must be;" mentally adding, with a little half sob, "for her sake."

"Last night I meant to get away from this place at once—before people were about in the morning; but I could not leave you so, and I do not know how to get out of my promise to Aubyn without bringing upon myself all sorts of questioning. I must stay a few days, if you do not mind."

"Oh, no; pray do not go before you intended. Do nothing that might attract attention. It would only make things worse for me than they are."

"I want to make things better for you. Do not be troubled about me. I know you are sorry. And, as for yourself, how can you be to blame?"

She shook her head. Endeavour as he might to spare her, she blamed herself far more than she blamed him. They had both

been in the wrong, but she the most. It ought not to have been possible!

The children came running towards them; Algy in great excitement about having seen a large fish leap out of the water as it rushed down its stony bed.

"We are friends?" repeated Gerard, in a pleading tone.

"Yes," nervously, "so long as we are both true to——" She hesitated, and the impatient children gave her no time to finish the sentence, catching her hands, and begging her to make haste, or she would be too late to see the fish.

They were separated; he to be pressed into Mrs. Brandreth's service, and she to be dragged down to the water's edge, to watch for the fish which Algy felt sure could not be far off.

"Friends," she was thinking. "Yes; Dorrie's husband and sister must be friends."

But the children did not allow her time for reflection; plying her with eager questions about everything that excited their wonder or curiosity; making plaintive inquiries, between times, as to when luncheon would be ready. When, at length, the summons came, Mrs. Brandreth made it sufficiently apparent that she considered the governess's duties ought to absorb all her attention. To be ignored was no annoyance to Mabel. She was, just then, only too desirous to escape notice as much as possible. Being bored by the children was easier to bear than having to talk to their elders.

Gerard was in the place of honour by Mrs. Brandreth, with the privilege of being allowed to assist her in dispensing the hospitalities, which for the moment, at least, kept him too much occupied to allow his attention to wander. She found it very delightful thus to be showing her friends what she chose to call his devotion, and she was prepared to make the most of the occasion. But she was very quickly made to recognize that there were limits to his obedience. The ease with which, the moment he chose to do so, he broke the net which she imagined was so securely woven about him, might have seemed ominous to one with less self-confidence. Whatever he chose to do, he did; and this with a cool indifference to opinion not very flattering to her.

It was not very agreeable to Mrs. Brandreth to see him carry off the lobster mayonnaise, of which there was not a too large supply, to the governess, although she was afraid of attempting to prevent him. He really seemed so obtuse in some respects

that he might be capable of asking her, before people, if she did not wish Miss Leith to have any. She must wait until everything was secure before attempting to use her influence in that way.

"You like this, I think?" he was saying, as he offered the mayonnaise to Mabel.

"Thank you, Gerard," trying to look and speak as a sister should.

"How desirous he is to be friends again!" thought Mabel. "No, it will not happen again. It must have been a momentary madness, as he called it. It is not so bad as I thought. Once back with Dorrie, and it will all be forgotten like a miserable dream. He will be himself again, and I——" she broke off with a little sigh. What did it matter about her?

But one sitting near had heard the low spoken "Gerard," and seen the expression in her eyes and the blush rise in her cheeks. To Richard Noel it was a revelation. Gerard Harcourt was the man who had stood in his way, then; it was to him she had alluded the night before. Gerard Harcourt, who had only half an hour ago contrived, on their way through the woods, to give Noel a hint that he knew he had been making inquiries as to Miss Leith and the amount of her fortune, and more than a hint as to what he suspected was his motive for so doing. No; he was quick to recognize that any hopes he had formed with regard to Miss Leith's money were rendered as futile as were those with regard to herself. Harcourt had constituted himself her guardian; and with such a guardian he did not care to cross swords.

In her pride and gratification Mrs. Severn had not been able to abstain from giving her "dear friend" a hint of her daughter's bright prospects; and just before luncheon his sister had spoken a few sharp words to Noel, informing him that what she had warned him of had come to pass, and taunting him with not having had the power to win Flora Severn. This blow to his self-love, coupled with the consciousness of having failed with Mabel, he found it difficult enough to bear without the additional sting which came with the discovery that his successful rival was no other than Gerard Harcourt—the man who had always kept him at arm's length, and whose quiet satire he had occasionally winced under. But once in possession of the facts, he was armed, he told himself. He would at least be able to make them recognize he was not an enemy so mean that he could not strike a blow in his own defence! To begin with, he



would be able to show his sister, who, in the first elation of her hopes respecting Harcourt, had not been able to avoid talking to her brother of the bright prospect opening out to her, that she too had been premature in her conclusions respecting her own powers to win. The admirer she so much prided herself upon was the accepted lover of another woman. When she learned that, Agatha would no longer be able to taunt him about his failure. As to Harcourt—

A new thought flashed suddenly across his mind ; and he sat for a few moments gazing straight before him, a hard smile upon his lips, and an evil light in his eyes. "It would but be in self-defence ; they had been the first to declare war. In fact, he had been scurvily treated all round ; and they must take the consequences. But he must be content to wait until the proper time came to strike. Let Agatha still plume herself upon her conquest, and Miss Leith still believe in her lover. He saw a better way of reprisal than to open their eyes before the time was ripe. It might do Agatha more good to reap the consequences of her own folly than to be protected from them ; and as for the other two—" The smile upon his lips grew harder, and he went on with his luncheon more enjoyably, making himself more agreeable than he had yet been to little Miss Maitland, who sat on his left hand, and partook heartily of what was offered to her, making the meal as much a business as everything else she engaged in.

Meanwhile the children were left pretty much to their own devices, and made the most of the opportunity, readily accepting any and everything that was presented to them by the good-natured, if somewhat injudicious, portion of the guests.

"It couldn't be better in real fairy-land !" whispered Mima to Algy, her cheeks expanding, and her whole face shining with contentment.

Too much absorbed in her own reflections to take any heed of what was going on, and not, in fact, knowing very exactly what they ought or ought not to eat, Mabel sat quietly by, while her charges partook indiscriminately of Perigord pie, salad, fruit-tarts, cream-cheese, and anything else that came in their way, even to sips of champagne, enjoyably eating on until Algy's beautiful pink and white complexion became clouded, and Mima suddenly emerged from "fairy-land," heavy-eyed and cross, proclaiming her unqualified disgust at things in general, and picnics in particular. She became quarrelsome, and finding Algy

quite prepared to take up the glove, they presently came to open warfare, amidst a storm of tears and angry ejaculations.

"Really!" ejaculated Mrs. Brandreth, as, after an ineffectual attempt to soothe and quiet them, Mabel took the two by the hand and dragged them away, "Miss Leith seems to have no influence over the children whatever. I was half afraid to bring them without a nurse, although they ought to be old enough now."

Mr. Hurst eagerly sprang up, begging Mrs. Brandreth to allow him to try and help Miss Leith; but his mother immediately found occupation for him in another direction. "Dear Miss Norton wanted to be shown the way to the 'View.'"

Miss Severn turned towards Noel and sweetly advised him to try what he could do to help Miss Leith with the children. He was so great a favourite with them, and had been of assistance to their governess before, hadn't he? showing by her manner and meaning looks that she was not unaware of his meetings with Mabel and her pupils on their daily walks. Her readiness to send him was additional proof of what his sister had told him, and did not tend to soothe his wounded vanity. Ready as he had been to throw off his allegiance to her, if it suited his purpose so to do, he did not like to know that it was no longer desired, resenting the idea of being unnecessary to the happiness of any woman whom he might take the trouble to captivate. He turned on his heel with a muttered oath, but not to go in search of the governess.

"Do you not think I am very considerate in helping him to find the opportunity he was wishing for?" added Miss Severn to her elderly admirer; desirous to set his mind at rest in the event of any rumour having reached him respecting Noel's attentions to herself, and going on to explain that she had heard he was *épris* with the governess, which was in fact true—she had heard it.

Mrs. Brandreth found Gerard unusually grave and abstracted. In vain did she put forth her powers of conversation for his behoof. For some reason she could not fathom, he seemed to-day altogether unimpressionable and different from himself as she had previously known him. Even her little hint, as they rose from luncheon, of her desire to ascertain whether a certain walk just beyond the weir was as pretty as it was said to be, seemed to fall on deaf ears. He turned away with a word or two about trying what he could do to help Miss Leith amuse the children, and walked off

in search of them, leaving Mrs. Brandreth with the dowagers of the party.

Gerard found Mabel and the children—still sufficiently uncomfortable to be quarrelsome, and give her a deal of trouble—near the weir. Nor could she induce him to leave her to manage them, and rejoin the others, whose merry voices and light-hearted laughter reached them now from one part of the woods, now another, as they explored in different directions. No; he had gone there to help her, and steadily set about it, showing not a little tact and consideration in so contriving matters as not to intrude himself upon her.

The look of fear—the way in which she shrank back when he came up—and the few hurried words of protest that “indeed, indeed, she needed no assistance,” had only the effect of rendering him more firm in his purpose. He must, at all costs, make her recognize that she could trust him to wound her no more.

Drawing Algy and Mima to his side with the promise that he had something interesting to show them, he left Mabel with quiet, gentle Sissy, and set forth with the other two. They were somewhat captious at first, wanting to have a fair understanding as to what it was they were to see. But he hurried them along, telling himself, with a grim smile, that here was an opportunity for testing the efficacy of Aubyn's remedy. He walked with such rapid strides as to oblige them to quicken their steps into a run in order to keep up with him, which left them very little breath for further questioning. In the expectation of presently coming upon some delightful surprise, they hurried eagerly on by his side, until his chief end was gained—dyspepsia was overcome—and they were in the best of humours again. Not a little disappointed were they when they found that they had been brought so long a distance at racing speed only to look at “a stupid old ruin, and trees and things.”

But he gravely explained that he could not know that they had no taste for such things. They graciously exonerated him from blame, and in recognition of this, he did his best to make the way back shorter, by narrating to them some of his adventures in Norway, and what Algy considered better still, a hair-breadth escape from some brigands in Spain. He brought them back to Mabel quite cured, and they informed Sissy in a whisper, that he was much better to be with “than you would ever think.”

Mabel sat gazing at the falling water with troubled, unseeing eyes. Sissy remained silent, nestling closely up to her side, with the intuitive perception that there was something wrong, and that she could best express her sympathy that way. Mabel was not too much absorbed to be unheeding of the love by her side, turning once or twice to kiss the little hand put up with timid tenderness to stroke her cheek.

When they were rejoined by Gerard and the two children, Mabel rose with nervous haste, saying that the carriages were ordered for four, and that there would be only just time to go through the woods and up the lane.

"Thank Mr. Harcourt, Algy. It was kind," with a momentary upward glance into his eyes, expressive of her own appreciation.

He stood aside with a bow, and they passed on, the children murmuring a little discontentedly at having to return without having gone through the whole of the programme, by helping to gather sticks to boil the water, and having tea like gipsies.

On her homeward drive Mrs. Brandreth found her companion very dull and *distract*. But there was a great deal more respect in the quiet gravity of his bearing towards her, could she have understood and appreciated it, than when he had indulged her in the kind of talk she preferred. That she could imagine he admired her did not for a moment cross his mind. On the contrary, he believed that he had allowed his opinion of her to be too evident to others if not to herself. But all that was over now. No woman's folly or weakness would again be made a jest of by Gerard Harcourt. For one woman's sake all would now be safe from his satire.

(To be continued.)



## THE SHORTER POEMS OF ROBERT BRIDGES.



IN a Note at the end of his volume of Shorter Poems, Mr. Bridges explains its division into four books. "The poems contained in Book I. are my final selection from a volume published in 1873. Those of Book II. are from a pamphlet published in 1879. Book III. is made up of poems from a pamphlet published in 1880; to which are added others of about the same date. . . . Some of these have already appeared in a volume printed for me by my friend the Rev. C. H. Daniel in 1884. All the poems in Book IV. are now printed for the first time."

The volumes referred to in this note sometimes allure the eye in a bookseller's catalogue, offered for their weight in silver; the pamphlets, far more rarely, offered for their weight in gold: but the poor scholar to whom a *Daniel* is as a *Bodoni*, and who did not happen to hear of the unadvertised shilling pamphlets before Mr. Bridges again hardened his heart and withdrew them, has been hitherto compelled to make his own copy from the library of a more fortunate friend, or the British Museum. Mr. Bridges is to be congratulated on his condescension from such a seventh heaven into the open day of this ordinary world.

It is now seventeen years since Mr. Bridges' first book of poems issued from the Chiswick Press, under the auspices of the English disciple of Aldus. A poet's first volume is always interesting to look back upon. It is possible after the lapse of two or three decades to discover in it, even in the poems which the author's maturer judgment rejects, the fresh voice, and the new harmonies, which constitute his gift to the world. At this time we have no leisure for such an investigation: we refer to the book for the sake of quoting a sentence from the dedicatory letter to Mr. H. E. Wooldridge. "At the present time, when



men seem to affect to have outgrown the rules of art, it is natural in one who turns to the great masters for satisfaction, to exaggerate the success of any attempt to work in their manner, and I know that it is where these poems aim at nothing else that they best please you." To this let us add a sentence from the "Note" to Mr. Bridges' poem, "Eros and Psyche": "In the absence of notes, it may be well to refer generally to Father Homer, Pindar, Plato, Moschus, Callimachus, the Greek anthology, Lucian, Lucretius, Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, Botticelli, Titian, Rafael, Spenser, Wyatt, the mighty Shakespeare, and others." It would be hardly fair to treat such an acknowledgment of particular obligations as a general confession of faith; but the two passages may at least be allowed to illustrate each other, and confirm the evidence of the poems themselves, that in many matters of his art Mr. Bridges is reactionary.

Of Victorian influence the reader will find none or little; there are no echoes of Tennyson, or Browning, or Arnold; few of the previous generation of poets; there may be a reminiscence of Wordsworth in iv. 22; of Shelley in ii. 13; perhaps a touch of Blake's rhythm in iv. 14; but except for these, and a stray note of Mr. Swinburne in the Elegy (i. 2), the antecedents of the book must be sought in other countries, or if in England, then in England of the 16th century; and in that century less in Spenser or "the mighty Shakspeare" than Wyatt, Sidney, and certain madrigal writers in the *Miscellanies*. Mr. Bridges' kinship with the earlier Elizabethans may be discerned, on the one hand in his choice of metres, his fondness for emphatic rhymes and a crisper vocabulary than that of to-day; and, on the other, in the simplicity and directness of his expression of thought, though the thought itself is apt to be more recondite. Several poems in the volume before us are in a hexasyllabic metre, which was also a favourite metre of Wyatt's: a comparison of the two will show the nature of the influence. The following stanzas are from Tottell's *Miscellany* (Arber, p. 50):—

"Marvell no more altho  
The songs I sing do mone:  
For other lyfe than wo,  
I never proued none.  
And in my hart also  
Is graven with letters depe  
A thousand sighs and mo:  
A flood of tears to wepe.

How may a man in smart  
 Find matter to rejoice?  
 How may a moorning hart  
 Set foorth a pleasant voice?  
 Play whoso can that part :  
 Nedes must in me appere  
 How fortune ouerthwart  
 Doth cause my moorning chere."

We venture to say that if these two stanzas appeared in a modern magazine, competent but unlearned critics would attribute them to the earlier muse of Mr. Bridges; just as, if certain verses of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's "Ode on the Immortality of Love" were to appear under the same circumstances, they would be recognized for Lord Tennyson's. But the reader must judge for himself. This is Mr. Bridges' "Description of such a one as he would love" (ii. 1), in a dialogue between the Muse and the Poet.

*"Will Love again awake,  
 That lies asleep so long?  
 O hush! ye tongues that shake  
 The drowsy night with song.*

*It is a lady fair  
 Whom once he digned to praise,  
 That at the door doth dare  
 Her sad complaint to raise.*

She must be fair of face,  
 As bold of heart she seems,  
 If she would match her grace  
 With the delight of dreams.

*Her beauty would surprise  
 Gazers on Autumn eves,  
 Who watched the broad moon rise  
 Upon the scattered sheaves.*

O sweet must be the voice  
 He shall descend to hear,  
 Who doth in Heaven rejoice  
 His most enchanted ear.

*The smile, that rests to play  
 Upon her lip, foretells  
 What musical array  
 Tricks her sweet syllables.*

And yet her smiles have danced  
In vain, if her discourse  
Win not the soul entranced  
In divine intercourse.

*She will encounter all  
This trial without shame,  
Her eyes men Beauty call,  
And Wisdom is her name.*

Throw back the portals then,  
Ye guards, your watch that keep,  
Love will awake again  
That lay so long asleep."

Too much must not be made of Mr. Bridges' metrical debt to the 16th century. There he began, but there he has not ended. He has sat no less at the feet of Milton, and if his plays were at present in evidence, it might be said without fear of dissent, that no one since Milton has written such accomplished blank verse or such majestic choruses (in the Greek sense). One of these, (from *Prometheus the Firegiver*), is reprinted (iii. 1) in the present volume, and those to *Achilles in Scyros* may be praised in passing.

It is probable that the precision of the metre will be the first quality of Mr. Bridges' verse to strike the reader of this volume. Accustomed as he is to the laxer prosody introduced by Coleridge (who compared metre to "yeast," regarding it only as a "stimulant of the attention," not as an end in itself), the reader on first opening Mr. Bridges' poems may find the change rather too bracing for his æsthetic system. The present reviewer, though he delights to honour this stern Puritanism in general, finds yet here and there a poem not tolerable; such as the *Rondeau* (i. 15), with its unpleasant sequence of rhymes—dips, sips, hips, clips, tips, lips, drips, strips; the double-rhymed stanzas beginning "Dear Lady, when thou frownest" (i. 6), and "Since thou, O fondest and truest" (iii. 17);\* and again, those beginning, "Fire of heaven, whose starry arrow," all of which, it must be said, jig.

In regard to metrical matters, poets fall roughly into two classes, which may be distinguished by two common metaphors,

\* The reader will find the only successful instance known to the present writer of an "iambic" 3½-foot stanza with two dissyllabic rhymes in a poem in Davison's 'Poetical Rhapsody,' beginning "Sweet love, mine only treasure, For service long unfeigned." The author, "A. W.," occasionally reminds one of Mr. Bridges.

those whose "numbers flow," and those whose lines are "well-filed;"\* and the latter class have commonly the further amusing characteristic of arrogating to themselves solely the title of "artist." Of the liquid school Shakespeare is king; and we find Ben Jonson, a chieftain of the opposite or Vulcanic party, somewhat uneasy at his neighbour's ease; he told Drummond of Hawthornden "that Shakespeare wanted art," and every reader must feel that the second part of the fine eulogium prefixed to the first Folio is of the *laudando præcipere* kind; Milton too, who was "sealed of the tribe of Ben," speaks of Shakespeare's "native woodnotes wild." In the next century we have Gray of the one side and Collins of the other, and we find Gray writing to Thomas Wharton that Collins had "a bad ear." At the beginning of the present century Shelley inherits in double measure, what Coleridge also shares, the fluidity of Chaucer, and Shakespeare and Collins; while Wordsworth (except in his blank verse) best represents the tradition of the smithy, not without its traditional disdain. But it is interesting in this case to find the representative of the liquid school for once retorting. In the preface to the "Witch of Atlas," Shelley contrasts his Witch with Wordsworth's "Peter Bell," in a phrase which Shelley's successors, if such there be, will find full of consolation:

"Light the vest of flowing metre  
She wears, he proud as dandy with his stays."

Mr. Bridges, as we pointed out above, began his career as a poet with a lament over the decay of "art," in which he shows himself of the faction of Jonson, Milton, and Gray; and it must be acknowledged that his lines are even more finely filed.

The poems which exhibit the greatest mastery over pure metre are those printed together at the beginning of Book III. The reader may not at first think so, because the rhythm is irregular, and does not beat time for him; but if he will only trust himself, and lay stress where accent and emphasis require, he will find that these reveal a latent metre. This method of writing, which on its first public appearance was styled a "new prosody," is an inversion of Mr. Bridges' ordinary method, in which the accented syllables of words occur regularly (unless for special reasons they do *not*) † in the stressed places of the verse.

\* The distinction holds more or less in prose, as may be seen by comparing De Quincey and Mr. Pater.

† In this case Mr. Bridges sometimes marks them with an accent, as in the stanza quoted below. —

In both methods stress and accent coincide, and the syllables in the unstressed places are short. How much a peculiarity this is the reader may be interested to discover for himself by an examination of contemporary writing. Of the poems written in the "new prosody," the finest is that "On a dead Child," one of the few poems upon death in English which really touch one; the cleverest is that upon "London Snow," of which, as we now are speaking only of metre, a few verses must find place here.

LONDON SNOW.

"When men were all asleep the snow came flying,  
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,  
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,  
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;  
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;  
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:  
Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;  
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,  
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.  
All night it fell, and when full inches seven  
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,  
Its clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;  
And all awoke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness  
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:  
The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness;  
The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;  
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,  
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare."

Attention may also be directed to several instances of the skilful management of the six-line stanza used by Spenser in his "Astrophel" (ii. 3, 10; iii. 77, from the last and best of which a verse will be quoted below); as well as to a fine example of the "Rime Royal" (iii. 13), a noble and characteristic "Ode to Joy."

But good rhythm is only one constituent of beautiful verse, just as grace is only one constituent of human beauty; in the one we require beauty of colour, as well as of line and movement; and in the other, besides rhythm, what we have no more distinctive name for than "music," or "melody." Every poet worthy of his title must have his own music; the music of Shelley's verse is of a different quality from Coleridge's; Mr. Swinburne once happily contrasted them as lark with nightingale; a typical Tennysonian line is unmistakable ("Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy"), and so is a line of Browning, when his throat is clear ("Silent silver lights and darks undreamt of"), or a line of Arnold,



("The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea"). Has Mr. Bridges then a peculiar music? To determine the question let us choose a verse from each of the four parts of his book.

"I sang it to the sky,  
That veiled his face to hear  
How far her azure eye  
Outdoes his splendid sphere;  
But at her eyelids' name  
His white clouds fled for shame."—(i. 13.)

"Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,  
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,  
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding  
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?  
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,  
When skies are cold, and misty, and hail is hurling,  
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest  
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling."—(ii. 2.)

"Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,  
Uncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree:  
And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake;  
Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!"—(iii. 15.)

"Spring goeth all in white,  
Crowned with milk-white may:  
In fleecy flocks of light  
O'er heaven the white clouds stray.  
White butterflies in the air;  
White daisies prank the ground:  
The cherry and hoary pear  
Scatter their snow around."—(iv. 8.)

The last example is a complete poem; the other verses are rudely torn from their context and suffer in consequence; but not so much that they do not leave clearly audible an unmistakably fresh voice. But this is only half what we wished to show. The first casual reader of the book could discover that: for the voice is aggressively fresh, at least among modern voices; the more important question of course is, Is the voice musical? We should not care to possess the organ of hearing which, after listening to these four examples, decides in the negative. "Qui habet aurem, audiat." Possibly the reader will prefer the last example of the four; it has greater simplicity; it has the air of having been cast at a jet, and so indeed it may have been; only there has been infinite pains spent upon the mould. To the

critic Mr. Bridges' arrangement of his volume in chronological order is most interesting. He knows that in the case of certain poets—Wordsworth, for example—their early work is the best; that in the case of others, like Keats, the last is the best; and that in the case of yet others, like Coleridge, good and bad have no relation to time. If any poet ever sang "but as the linnet sings," it was Coleridge; the story of his composing "Kubla Khan" in a dream is an allegory of all his best work; of him the word "inspiration" might almost be interpreted in its popular sense of a passive will and a dictating Muse. Mr. Bridges stands at the opposite pole of creation from Coleridge; he is always self-possessed; his will is always alive and active, sometimes too active; so that we are fain to cry "How clever!" or with Polonius, "*gibbous moon* is good." And therefore the critic is not surprised to discover that the difference between first and last in Mr. Bridges' work is principally in the degree of the artist's skill. There was no turbid imagination in his first book which needed clarifying; many of its poems were professedly studies and exercises; and from that point the critic may trace the growth of the artist's cunning until, as in the last example quoted, it reaches the perfection of self-concealment.

A few words about Vocabulary. In accuracy of use Mr. Bridges leaves nothing to desire, but in this he cannot be said to go beyond other poets, his contemporaries, who are scholars. His greater austerity shows itself in points of accentuation and syntax, in a habit of tight packing his lines, and now and then in preference for forms etymologically more correct but obsolete, such as "an eaves," "a pease," revivals of doubtful euphony, and against the genius of the modern language. A further distinction may be traced in his large use of monosyllables, especially such crisp monosyllables as "spy," "stay," "stint," "stud," "tent," "trick," "fleck." The *Spectator* once rested an indictment against Mr. Arnold's morals on his fondness for the word "cool;" an equally good (or bad) case might be made out against Mr. Bridges for his constant use of "scatter."

We approach now the bewildering topic of Imagination. The poet, we are taught, is of "imagination all compact," but no one tells us clearly what this "imagination" may be. Coleridge, the greatest critic England ever had, warned us against confusing it with a use of imagery, and promised a definition; but when it came to the point he found it more convenient to quote Schelling, and contented himself with illustrations from Wordsworth. In the

case of a dramatist, we know at once what we mean by imagination; the dramatist creates, "he gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." But how can a lyric poet in dealing with the world we know, be said to create? The fact would seem to be that the word must cover the poet's whole *emotional* view of things, in which he sees them in a new light, "the light that never was on sea or land." He is a poet, we like to think, by virtue of this "divine vision," together with the "divine faculty" of representing it to us. Every man of education has his working theory of the universe, which may be mainly metaphysical or mainly scientific, or mainly a familiarity with what lies before the unassisted senses; or on the other hand it may be only secondarily one of these, and primarily emotional. It is thus with the poets; in the heat of their emotion, things which to us look so fixed and solid, dissolve, take new combinations, and discover strange likenesses to other things. In this imaginative mood we may all have a faint share at times; in poets it may alternate with other moods, as in Wordsworth with his philosophy; but in every case it is as individual as any other passion. How different was Shelley's world from Keats', and from Coleridge's!

This is a digression, but it is dangerous to use the word "imagination" without some scholion. How may we describe Mr. Bridges' imagination? His plays are not at this time before us, or we might decide, what in the present writer's judgment is the fact, that his chief imaginative gift is dramatic. As it is, our question must be, What in his lyrics does Mr. Bridges present to us as his view of the world?

His view would seem to be in the main scientific; that is to say, the view obtained by the bodily senses at their best. For accuracy of observation and power to convey a no less accurate impression Mr. Bridges is not second to Lord Tennyson. We remember nothing in English poetry superior as a picture of still life, to the verses entitled "Last week in February 1890" (iv. 5); or as a picture of motion to these two quatrains (iv. 3).

"The upper skies are palest blue  
Mottled with pearl and fretted snow;  
With tattered fleece of inky hue  
Close overhead the storm-clouds go.

Their shadows fly along the hill  
And o'er the crest mount one by one;  
The whitened planking of the mill  
Is now in shade and now in sun."

unless it be a stanza upon shooting a bridge (in iii. 7) :

"Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,  
Where with its arches three it sucked the mass  
Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,  
Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass;  
And pulling for the middle span, we drew  
The tender blades aboard, and floated through."

Worthy of particular note too is the poem upon "the Windmill" (iv. 13), and for further confirmation we may be allowed to refer to two passages in *Eros and Psyche*, one describing the action of gravitation (vi. 27), the other the remarkable sunsets of a few years since, (i. 25), and to the Fire chorus in *Prometheus*. The critic with a case to plead may protest that such writing is a mere *tour de force*, but the reader is not likely to grumble; he will wish that more poets were capable of such force, and reflect with Calverley "how much fewer volumes of verse there 'd be," if poets were licensed only on such condition. But, no doubt, both critic and the "general" reader prefer poems in which description is subordinate to some emotion; and such there are. In the earliest section of all is the exquisite *Elegy* (i. 2), with its unforgettable use of the word *touch*; and the *Poppy* (i. 9), and there are many later; the best is the last and shortest (iv. 12), possibly the most perfect poem in the book.

"The hill pines were sighing,  
O'ercast and chill was the day:  
A mist in the valley lying  
Blotted the pleasant May.

But deep in the glen's bosom  
Summer slept in the fire  
Of the odorous gorse-blossom  
And the hot scent of the brier.

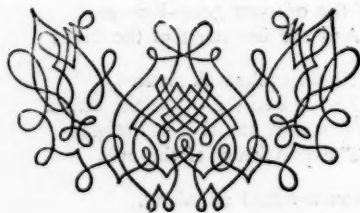
A ribald cuckoo clamoured,  
And out of the copse the stroke  
Of the iron axe that hammered  
The iron heart of the oak.

Anon a sound appalling,  
As a hundred years of pride  
Crashed, in the silence falling:  
And the shadowy pine-trees sighed."

It remains to speak shortly of the other contents of the volume. The poems of Sentiment and Reflection are pitched in a lofty key;

several of them have been incidentally referred to, such as the "Ode to Joy," and the lines "On a Dead Child;" others deserving particular notice are the two "Spring Odes," which contrast the pleasures of town and country life to a man of feeling and education. In the lyric of pure passion Mr. Bridges is not happy. "My bed and pillow are cold" (iii. 10), may serve as an instance. The song to Joy (iv. 2) is inarticulate; if this be compared with the sonnet "Ah heavenly joy" (No. LXXV. in the series called "The Growth of Love," printed at Mr. Daniel's press) it will be seen clearly where Mr. Bridges' strength lies and does not lie. There are many love-lyrics in the book touched with graceful fancy, but they leave one cold; "I have loved flowers that fade" (ii. 13) is a fine variation on the theme of Shelley's "Music when soft voices die;" "I praise the tender flower" (iii. 8), and "I love my lady's eyes" (iii. 16), are beautifully carved in ivory; two love poems, however, there are, which have the pulse of life. The one is dramatic, *The Philosopher to his Mistress* (iii. 5); the other, "Thou didst delight my eyes" (iii. 12), with an especially fine last stanza. All these are in six-syllable lines. It was Coleridge's advice to Tennyson, according to the *Table Talk*, to write in one metre until he had thoroughly mastered it; Mr. Bridges' practice has certainly made him the greatest living master of the six-syllable verse.

H. C. BEECHING.





## ASTRÆA REDUX.

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ADOWN the walk,  
 The garden all aglisten 'twixt two showers,  
 She passed, and left commotion 'mongst the flowers.  
 Shook the tall arum's stalk  
 With envy; blushed the rose more crimson yet  
 Sighing, "Farewell, my reign!"; the violet  
 Drooped lower her sweet head,  
 "My crown of modesty must wither now," she said.

In the far prime,  
 Bright rose from Eastern foam the Cyprian queen,  
 And men fell down in worship, nor had been  
 In the long tract of time  
 Peer to that splendour; Greece reputed wise  
 And revered Pallas of the owl-dark eyes;  
 But when this wonder came  
 Old-vaunted worth grew poor, past loveliness a name.

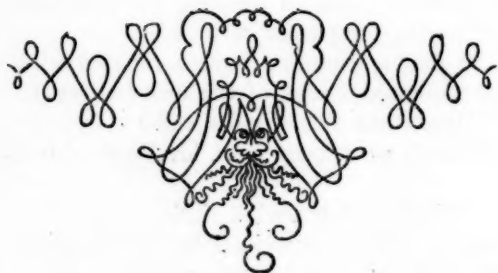
Would'st learn what dark  
 Threatens, what unimagined blackness' reign,  
 If the Immortals' envy snatch again  
 Their, and Earth's, darling? Mark  
 How, when some flying star with trailing hair  
 Has quenched its burning path in turbid air,  
 Only by Night o'ercast  
 The amazed heavens can guess what untold splendour passed.

Ask not her name:  
 The light winds whisper it on every hand;  
 The river rustling where, by sedgy strand,  
 Lily and iris flame,

Murmurs no other ; save of her is heard  
No utterance in earth ; and the glad bird  
Of morning, that on high  
Triumphant mounts and sings, proclaims her through the sky.

Were there no tongue  
But mine to syllable her beauty's praise,  
My voice should weary heaven and earth with lays ;  
Methinks 'twould not be long  
Ere to each waste and pathless crag were known  
That preciousness ! but now my songs are grown  
Needless importunate things,  
And slander of desert wherewith a whole world rings.

R. WARWICK BOND.



## NOTES OF THE MONTH.



### NOTES FROM PARIS—THE HANDEL FESTIVAL.

#### NOTES FROM PARIS.

THE successful strike of the omnibus men could not but produce more attempts of the kind amongst all the discontented of various callings—and they are Legion.

Everything human being open to improvement, there is, not unnaturally, a general wish to profit, individually, by possible improvements. So the bakers' men led the way, with the idea that they were about to terrify Paris into submission, on pain of reducing its inhabitants to the condition experienced during the memorable siege. But they were strangely mistaken in their anticipations; the way being now open all around Paris, railways can bring any amount of food required as fast as it is needed; besides the assistance provided by the army, which, being under recognized discipline, ignores strikes. It is reckoned that 1,800,000 lbs. of bread are required daily for the city of Paris; the flour-mills and bakeries of the army alone could provide half that quantity, while such additional supplies were poured in from the suburbs and the provincial towns, even as far as Marseilles, that plenty became overpowering; with the additional mortifying discovery that bread might be of better quality in many places than what is found even in Paris! Bakers and butchers (who also threatened to refuse their services) discovered that the battle was too hard to fight, and although grumbling meetings are still held, they have virtually surrendered, while relieving their feelings by "tall talk," which does no harm. Hairdressers' assistants also considered themselves ill-used, and tried to go out on strike; but soon discovered that no one absolutely required them, and that the privation was endured with Parisian philosophy by the general public.

The great subject of complaint common to all the strikers refers to the dealings of the various agencies, and not those of the masters by whom they are employed.

In former days, the men seeking work stood on the banks of the

Seine, "sur la grève," awaiting engagements, so that being out of work, or disengaged, was called "être en grève," or free to stand "sur la grève" with the unemployed. "La Place de Grève," famous in olden times as the scene of executions, and often of popular disturbances (where Victor Hugo's "Esmeralda" danced before the church of Notre-Dame), was so called from its proximity to the banks of the Seine ("les grèves") which induced the men to stand there, as a convenient place to be hired.

The custom has fallen into disuse, but the name remains, and is now misapplied to those voluntarily refusing employment.

The old direct intercourse between masters and men, chosen freely upon personal inspection, no longer exists, and the only means of getting regular employment is now practically confined to the action of the various Agencies, who seem to take undue advantages, and are likely to be roughly treated sooner or later. They are accused not only of charging a too high percentage, but also of insidiously causing the dismissal of the men, with a view to multiplying their own profits. The Agencies being, like most French institutions, under the direct control of the police, provide, however, some guarantee as to the character of the men recommended, which could not easily be procured elsewhere. But the campaign now taking place against them, and the increased ill-will of the men, suggest the possibility of supplying their place by other means, which, though not devoid of serious objections, are now under discussion and may prevail.

One of the most curious trades in Paris, and one of the most characteristic, is that of the *chiffonniers*, or rag-pickers, who are now getting up a small demonstration of their own, in opposition to the free importation of a paste made of saw-dust, which is used for coarse paper. Their trade has already suffered considerably from the introduction of dust-bins, regularly emptied every morning by carts, which go round for the purpose; but notwithstanding police regulations, a good deal of rubbish is still thrown in the street, and the "chiffonnier" may be seen at late hours of the night, with his basket on his back, his lantern, and the long hook with which he turns over the refuse. The "chiffonniers" state that at present they cannot earn more than 15 or 20 sous a day, *beyond their food, which they pick up thus*, or which is given to them. They will turn any refuse to account, and make something out of it (infinitely repulsive, and apparently deleterious), but from which they do not shrink!

With a tax on the saw-dust paste, for which they petition, they might earn 5 or 6 sous a day more than at present, for the price of rags would then rise. All the cotton and linen rags of good quality are, it is said, kept for the English market, the French retaining only what is inferior. The woollen rags are unravelled and carded, and made into

cheap goods; the red trousers of the French army, for instance, are thus turned into caps, which are sold by hundreds of thousands in Asia Minor. Silk rags, treated in the same manner, are used for the padding of various articles. Bottles of all kinds are highly appreciated, but even bits of glass are useful, being ground up into dust for glass-paper. Many bottles and china pots are bought from the "*chiffonniers*" to be used for fraudulent imitations. Old corks are cut to fit small phials. Old play-bills or advertisements are pounded up for pasteboard. Bits of cigars are a great treat, reserved for the use of the "*chiffonnier*" himself. Old tins are very valuable; often the "*chiffonnier*" fills them with earth, and uses them like bricks to build a wall, supporting a hut, made of every imaginable refuse; as may be seen by those who have the curiosity to visit the "*cités des chiffonniers*," where they congregate, encamped like savages. When the tins are not kept for the "*chiffonnier's*" own use, they are turned into the little trifles and toys sold so wonderfully cheap at the booths of fairs, or at the New Year. The ingenuity with which the French make something pretty out of what would seem to be the most hopeless rubbish is really very remarkable.

There are 20,000 "*chiffonniers*" in Paris; it is needless to add that they are the dregs of the population. But, strange to say, they are generally honest, and often bring to the police anything of value found amongst the odds and ends which are their legitimate property. It is stated that their peculiar business represents, daily, a sum of 30,000 francs (£1200), incredible as this may seem to those who have not studied the question. In favourable times the "*chiffonnier*" earns on an average from 2 to 3 francs a day.

The terrible catastrophe of Menchœstein, near Basle, has caused a good deal of anxiety as to the safety of railway bridges in France, especially those built in the days when railway-traffic was considerably less, and which, therefore, may be supposed to be inadequate for present requirements and the enormous strain of multiplied heavy trains. The bridge of Asnières, near Paris, which crosses the Seine on the Western line, was foremost in the minds of enquirers, for all Parisians are called upon to pass over it frequently on their way to St. Germain, Versailles, and Havre. It is now stated that, after careful examination, no fears need remain as to its perfect safety. The final test usually applied is an experimental train (made up to a weight of four times that of an average train), which is brought to a stand-still on the middle of the bridge and left there for some time; it is then moved backwards and forwards over the bridge, at a rate of speed beginning at 20 kilomètres\* an hour, and increasing to 50 kilomètres.

The bridges are carefully tested, in all their component parts, every year.

\* An English mile represents about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  kilomètre.



It must be acknowledged that the management of French railways is exceedingly careful, and that accidents are comparatively few. After the war, the Companies took great pains to put everything in perfect order, after the unavoidable deterioration which had taken place, with the result that, between the years 1871 and 1880, on all the French lines only one traveller out of 28,000,000 has been killed, and one injured in 880,000.

In England, the proportion of killed is one in 13,000,000 of travellers; in Belgium, one in 25,000,000. Germany is the only country with fewer accidents than in France, the trains being very slow.

The "Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée" line, so much used by English travellers to the Riviera and Italy, is the least favourably noted as regards safety; which has given rise to the grim joke that the characteristic initials "P. L. M." used by the Company, should be interpreted, "Pour La Mort!"

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The severe winter has caused sad havoc in the flower-gardens, and still more in the fields of roses and violets around Paris, which supply the flower trade. The love of flowers here is of comparatively recent date; in former days nothing was thought of in the way of decoration beyond the well-known stiff bouquets in regular circles surrounded with lace paper. Now, the flower-shops are marvellous; even after the severe frost flowers are procured somehow, and only the individuals having an especial interest in the matter could perceive any deficiency. The great flower-shop in the Rue Royale, with its wonderful orchids; also those of Vaillant, and Lion, on the Boulevard des Capucines, are perfect pictures of exquisitely grouped flowers, all faultless specimens, which seem to come from fairy-land. The Japanese style is now in favour; large sprigs, with their buds and leaves assembled with that apparent carelessness which is the perfection of art, and tied with enormous bows of broad ribbon, twisted with the inimitable grace of Parisian fingers. These very choice flowers are sent to the florists direct from the nursery-gardens; but the flower-market at the Halles-Centrales begins its transactions at 4 o'clock A.M., and continues till about 8 o'clock A.M.

The "commissionnaires" who have their settled customers come first, to choose the flowers out of the baskets, sorting them into classes; the "très-beau" being reserved for the great florists, the simply "beau" for second-rate establishments; the "ordinaire" is made over to the street-sellers and the open-air markets. In winter, of course, the roses come from the Riviera; but after the end of May the roses of Nice and Cannes cease to be appreciated; only those growing round Paris are in favour. One variety of rose, called "la rose de France," under illustrious patronage, was much sought for a short time—but alas! the poor rose got into bad company, and since the unfortunate day when

it was blended with the carnations of Boulanger, it has fallen into disgrace.

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We can recommend for family reading "Amours Simples," par Pierre Maël; "Un Casque," par Henri Allais.

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#### THE HANDEL FESTIVAL.

The 13th Handel Festival adds another to the long list of successes connected with that event—an event which took place for the first time in 1784 in Westminster Abbey, and which has ever since held a most remarkable position in the annals of English music. The success of the early Festivals induced their promoters, in 1862, to establish a Triennial Musical Festival in honour of Handel, which has ever since been held at the Crystal Palace. It is perhaps the only English musical Festival which draws together an enormous mass of the general public, apart from that public representing music which may be found equally at any of our great country Festivals. Music, however to the majority of Englishmen is almost restricted to the name of Handel. Therefore the great gathering at the Crystal Palace bears a very special identity of its own; there, is to be heard what the English people *choose from music*, by giving it their entire support and approbation for more than a century; all classes of people are represented, but perhaps the Church has the foremost place. It must be remembered, in searching for the reasons of Handel's undoubted popularity over any other composer in England, that in, and for England, and to English words, were nearly all his greatest works composed, this last fact having, we believe, the strongest influence in obtaining for them the warm and widespread admiration which they certainly receive from all classes of English people. There has never been a time since its composition when the "Messiah" has not justly maintained a firm hold on the public mind. Even those among us who are not ardent Handel-worshippers, willingly bow the knee to the greatness of his "Messiah" and "Israel in Egypt," and their supremacy over the taste of the general public remains as undoubted as it was at their first hearing. No English Festival can afford to dispense, even if it were desirable to do so, with a performance of the "Messiah," and all country Societies combine in saying that, if only from a financial point of view, Handel's works are their most trustworthy and important support.

The broad, straightforward, easily comprehended style of this master seems to be specially adapted to the English nature, a style which we, as a nation, may almost be said to monopolize, for in no Continental musical event is such a tribute paid to Handel's name as that of which the recent performance at the Crystal Palace gives evidence. From a point of numbers alone, it must certainly be regarded as the most

representative, if we cannot say the most interesting, of English Festivals.

The enormous numbers in the chorus impress an audience not strictly musical, though, apart from the volume of tone, musicians cannot but be more struck with what may be called *the machinery* of the performances, than by their intrinsic musical worth. The finer shades must be, and are, absent throughout the choruses. Only Handel's broad, full style, and love of straightforward repetition, make the good performances of the various works a possibility; it may moreover be doubted whether such a performance would be possible at all with the music of any master save Handel, for these obvious reasons.

Regarding the "Messiah" and "Israel" everything that could possibly be said has been written years ago, when Bartolozzi gave his talent to beautiful engravings for Festival books, putting to shame our *fin de siècle* "book of the Concert," and when the said book was a much more important and valuable affair than it is at present; so we will turn to the principal musical interest of the Festival of 1891, which consisted in the production for the first time in England of a fine "Gloria Patri," written by Handel at the age of twenty-three; this piece of music is the only example of his writing for a double chorus and double orchestra, and it is impossible to say how greatly this composition gained, in comparison with others, by being performed with the accompaniments exactly as Handel wrote them. The two orchestras consist of violins, violincellos and double basses, there is also an organ part, and the simplicity of the scoring resulted in a very fine and impressive effect. This work is the only known chorus of Handel's in eight parts of this period (1707-1708) with his signature, which gives it a special interest. It consists, musically, of three subjects, the latter of which the composer used later as an "Alleluia" in the Oratorio of "Deborah," and again in the "Coronation Anthem." It is impossible to close even a short notice of the Handel Festival of 1891 without allusion to the magnificent singing of Mr. Santley, which will probably remain long in the memory of all who heard him; a lesson to every intelligent amateur present. Mr. Santley is no longer young, therefore opportunities of hearing him at his best should be very precious. Nothing could be finer than his performance throughout the Festival; his vigour, fire, and incomparable attack reached their highest point of excellency. His phrasing has few equals, his dramatic ideal, none. But in addition to its music, we believe the great position of the Handel Festival has for its basis, and for the source of its influence, that strong religious feeling, which first for the English people found its vent, musically speaking, in the great works and themes of George Frederic Handel.

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## OUR LIBRARY LIST.

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**THE YOUNG EMPEROR WILLIAM II. OF GERMANY.** By HAROLD FREDERIC. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) In a month of which the principal feature has been the cordial reception extended to His Imperial Majesty the German Emperor, there is of course something very appropriate in the production of this volume. It is an effort to trace the development of character in the young Kaiser since his elevation to the throne. But partly because the book has been produced to meet a present demand, partly perhaps owing to some predilections on the part of its author, it savours too much of journalism and too little of literature. No one can however deny that this volume forms an interesting study. In England we have been accustomed to think that the Emperor started with a certain dislike of our own nation, a mental attitude which was certainly not discouraged by Prince Bismarck. After our experience in the last month we are aware that the Emperor counts us among the chief friends of himself and of Germany. This change is sufficiently striking to give every Englishman an interest in the Kaiser Wilhelm; but when we have to add his unceasing vigour, his alertness to all the interests of the age, his fondness for sport, and the abundant evidences which he gives of a commanding and resolute personality—there is enough material to make for the majority of our countrymen a portrait which secures a very large measure of almost enthusiastic sympathy and attention.

**NAVAL WARFARE.** By REAR-ADMIRAL P. H. COLOMB. (*W. H. Allen & Co.*) There are other roads to fame than the path which leads to victory, and there are services which a man may render to his country perhaps greater than to die. Englishmen have reason to be proud of the wisdom, the public spirit, the wide knowledge and the singleness of purpose displayed in every page of Admiral Colomb's great work. He modestly attempts to fill the rôle of a pioneer in the untrodden ways of the history of naval tactics and strategies, with a view to lessening the danger threatening our Empire, which springs from a conviction that no laws can be discovered in the chaos of maritime affairs. That he has more than succeeded in establishing certain definite and permanent principles, such as no naval commander

can afford to overlook, and as capable of application to the modern ironclad as to the wooden walls of Drake, no reader of the book before us will be able to doubt for a moment. Starting from the sixteenth century he shows clearly that naval warfare proper is no mere "system of cross-ravaging," burning a town here and capturing a vessel there, then returning to port leaving things much as they were. It means the struggle for the permanent command of the sea; just as territorial warfare aims at the possession of the land in dispute, so does naval warfare aim at the possession, so to speak, of the sea. For this, two things are necessary; first, that commerce should be so great as to make the great water-way valuable; and secondly, that a nation should possess a fleet capable of remaining at sea. In a long historical review he makes it clear that a great nation cannot afford to say with Lord Byron that "man's control stops with the sea," and that in fact every failure such as that of Spain in the sixteenth century can ultimately be traced to a neglect to secure the command of the sea before attempting to invade the lands beyond it. Into the technical details we have no space to enter; but we can only hope that so great a master of naval tactics will give the world the further benefit of his researches and experience in some future volume.

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ESSAYS, REVIEWS, AND ADDRESSES. By DR. JAMES MARTINEAU. (*Longmans, Green, and Co.*) The second volume of Dr. Martineau's Essays contains papers for the most part dealing with the ecclesiastical controversies of some forty years ago. They are, however, of considerable interest even in this last decade of the century, for, as becomes a philosopher, Dr. Martineau brings to bear upon his subject those principles which would guide "the spectator of all time and of all existence." The assertion of the supreme jurisdiction of the individual conscience, the key-note of his philosophy, only comes out the more strongly from the review of that conflict of Churches and sects in which the more short-sighted enquirer might feel himself hopelessly lost. Of his besetting sin, the tendency to substitute metaphor for proof, there is a good example on p. 221, where also, in characteristic fashion, he seeks to exalt mankind at the expense of the animal world. But it is not minor defects of this kind which the reader of these Essays will chiefly remember. It is rather the "free mind and large heart" revealed in every line of Dr. Martineau's writings.

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ASCUTNEY STREET. By MRS. A. D. T. WHITNEY. (*The Riverside Press: Cambridge, Mass. U.S.A.*). In writing a story the telling "a plain unvarnished tale" is not the aim that Mrs. Whitney sets before herself. The problems and perplexities of life allure her from the straight path of fiction into the devious by-ways of mild metaphysics, and into the maze of a transcendently philosophic diction. In pursuing this aim Mrs. Whitney is neither daunted by the limitations of the English



language nor hampered by the laws that regulate metaphor and analogy. Her similitudes run reckless riot among her characters and incidents, till her somewhat enigmatic sentence (applied to the fashionable inhabitants of Ascutney Street), "The seizing upon signs became an utter degeneration in realities," might be taken as the key-note of her treatment of her characters. In "Ascutney Street" the chess-board and "Alice through the looking-glass" supply her with the signs and symbols, by which (in preference to words and actions) she interprets the mind and nature of her hero and heroine. The analogy is sometimes happy; but it is too often far to seek; and we feel like the Highlander who, overhearing a waiter ordering his dinner of "one lamb and one potato," remonstrated, declaring he "would prefer a little less of the lamb and a little more of the potato." In Mrs. Whitney's last story, we should prefer a little more incident and a little less philosophy; especially when we remember how charming some of her earlier stories were, and with what sympathy and insight she depicted girl-life.

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A GIRL IN THE CARPATHIANS. By M. M. DOWIE. (*George Philip & Son*). We are perfectly willing to concede that Miss Dowie did a remarkable thing in living by herself in a peasant's cottage in Eastern Galicia, and in subsequently wandering among the Carpathians with no companion but a guide. Up to this point we are in sympathy with our authoress, and do not withhold our due meed of admiration from the pluck and endurance necessary for the enterprise. But we think that the originality (on which she dwells with unnecessary emphasis) displayed in her choice of a summer residence is not likely to awaken the spirit of emulation of other tourists. There does not seem enough that is either beautiful or interesting in the country that she describes to attract travellers, whose incursions into her beloved solitudes Miss Dowie evidently dreads. Of her personal experiences, her bathes, her rides, her meals, her purchases, and her daily life, she writes in a clever, lively manner, and with great literary facility, if not finish. Her account of the peasants and their homes is picturesque, but superficial. One page of Herr Franzos' writings gives us more knowledge of and insight into the native life of these unknown Eastern lands, with their mixed nationalities and semi-barbarous civilization, than the whole of Miss Dowie's book.

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THE THREE MISS KINGS. By ADA CAMBRIDGE. (*Heinemann*.) It does not need a glance at the title-page to tell us that the writer of "The Three Miss Kings" is of the gentler sex. There is a lingering fondness in her descriptions of the beautiful garments which the "fairy godmother" bestows upon the lovely heroines not to be attained by the uninitiated male. But Miss Cambridge can do more



than describe details of costume and circumstance. In her former novel, "A Marked Man," she showed that she could grapple with some of the deeper problems of our age, and in the book now before us there are love-scenes instinct with true and tender feeling, which go far to raise her above the crowd of contemporary novelists. She is clearly well-acquainted with the various phases of life in Australia, and she has given us a pleasant picture of Melbourne society, free from the extravagances which rather marred her earlier work.

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**ON HEATHER HILLS.** (*Alexander Gardner.*) This seems to be the first work of some Scotch writer, the defects of whose present performance are more than counterbalanced by the marks of ability which promise much for the future. At present he needs to study the laws of construction and the necessary stages in the development of character. His transitions are too abrupt, and his situations sometimes impossible. The whole episode of May's desertion of her husband is against nature, given the circumstances of her marriage and the incredibly short time required to bring about her fall. Nor do we care greatly for the chapters in the style of Trollope, in which well-known politicians are introduced under slight disguises. Their conversation is heavy, as heavy as the laboured humour of the first chapter, in which Strong and the Australians are introduced. But in spite of all these glaring faults the story is undeniably a good one. There are scenes of real power and pathos, and there is a keen appreciation of the humours of the Highlands, as well as a love for the mountains and the heather, which shows itself in descriptive passages of genuine beauty.

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**RED-LETTER STORIES.** By JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS. (*Osgood M'Ilvaine & Co.*) To those who enjoy real American humour, and have the good taste to appreciate a pathetic rendering of ridiculous situations, we can heartily recommend Mr. Harris's "Red-Letter Stories." He does not write about his Southern planters, his Confederate soldiers, or his negroes; he simply transports us across the intervening space and time, and puts us down amongst a people of whom he himself is one. When we reluctantly close the book we feel that we have talked with Uncle Billy Powers, that we have walked with Judge Bascom about the old Bascom place, that we were hidden in the pantry with Josiah and Major Jimmy Bass when the irate Miss Sarah returned from church to find the house empty, and that we applauded the great lawyer Mr. Terrell, when he successfully defended the guilty Ananias. And to those who have not gone through these experiences we can only say, "Go and get Mr. Harris to give you an introduction."

**THE LITTLE MANX NATION.** By HALL CAINE. (*W. Heine-mann.*) Every one who has had the good fortune to read Mr. Hall Caine's beautiful fictions, "The Bondman" and "The Deemster," knows well how deep a knowledge of the Manx nation, its spirit and its history, the author possesses. This knowledge is now put before us in the most delightful form imaginable by the publication of three lectures on "The Little Manx Nation." Whilst preserving the informal character of spoken words, they yet reveal an intimate knowledge of the ancient history of the island, and contrive to convey to the reader a more vivid idea of the people, their origin, their character, and their customs than would be possible in a more formal treatise. Further, the rapid transitions from grave to gay, from mock heroics to solemn earnest, which (*pace* Mr. Caine and his preface) proclaim the literary artist, give to the little book a charm and vigour peculiarly its own. In one word, we might say that it is long since we read anything of the kind which gave us equal pleasure.

**THE NORMANS.** By SARAH JEWETT. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) There is a curious variety in the style of these "Stories of the Nations." In some, for instance in Mr. Morrison's "The Jews under Roman Rule," we have a serious historical work making no pretence of popularity in the ordinary sense of the word; others, as in the present case, are apparently designed either for children, or for folk so ignorant of history that their minds are filled with absurd expectations such as no reasonable reader could for a moment entertain. Miss Jewett has a good knowledge of the period about which she writes, and it is a period which cannot fail to be interesting; but the grown-up reader resents the constant recurrence of such phrases as "that the Count made a donkey of himself in good earnest," nor is he greatly moved by exhortations to read the "Ballad of the Revenge" or Miss Yonge's "Little Duke." But if this volume be really designed for children, it is admirably adapted to its purpose; and "children of a larger growth" will find much in it worthy of their attention when they have overcome the prejudices awakened by its style.

**POACHERS AND POACHING.** By JOHN WATSON, F.L.S. (*Chapman & Hall.*) Mr. Watson is a close observer of nature, and we are glad that he has preserved the results of some of his observations in the present volume, instead of leaving them to go the unhonoured way of the majority of magazine articles. But it might be as well, perhaps, so to revise these reprinted papers as to prevent the recurrence of passages almost precisely the same, as, for instance, on pages 29 and 189, and again on pages 7 and 270. Mr. Watson has evidently made a close study of the habits and methods of poachers, and his work would form an excellent "Gamekeeper's Manual." Yet its title

scarcely does it justice, for it is instinct with the love of the fields and woods, and all true lovers of nature will be grateful to him for letting them share in his pleasures.

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**THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT TO-DAY.** By G. J. HOLYOAKE. (*Methuen & Co.*) This is the second volume of the useful series on "Social Questions of to-day," and is calculated to remove most of the prejudices born of ignorance which impede the great co-operative movement. Mr. Holyoake puts his case well and clearly. Glancing at the prophets of social reform in antiquity and in mediæval days, he comes quickly to Robert Owen, the father of English co-operation, and then goes on to explain the principle of profit-sharing applied equally to commerce and to labour. Like other social reformers he is a little dogmatic, and lays it down clearly that most of the errors of human society are due to a neglect to acknowledge the causation of the will, without deigning to tell us what he means by that much misunderstood phrase. But his book contains a great number of statistics relative to the co-operative movement, and furnishes a most useful manual of information on the subject.

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**THE ADVENTURES OF MENDEZ PINTO.** Edited by ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) It was an excellent idea on the part of the publisher of "The Adventure Series" to give in his own words the narrative of the Prince of Adventurers. The edition now before us is a reprint, considerably abridged, of the translation made by Henry Cogan in 1663, and is appropriately introduced to the public by one who has himself seen men and things under extraordinary circumstances. M. Vambéry refutes the theory which would regard the narratives of Mendez Pinto and his like as mere audacious inventions, by pointing out that much which he relates has been subsequently verified, whilst a great deal is professedly related on hearsay evidence, and is of course exaggerated according to the tendency of the age. But the most interesting part of the preface is the passage in which the sneers directed at "mere adventurers" are deprived of their point by a reminder of the truth that "never did a man start on travel with the intention of becoming an adventurer; . . . he becomes such through the combination of circumstances." We heartily commend the whole book to our readers.

